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Liturgic Worship.

S E R M O N S

ON THE

BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER,

BY

BISHOPS AND CLERGY

OF THE

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

NEW YORK:

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PREFACE.

THE following course of Sermons on the Liturgy was preached in the City of New York under the auspices of the New York Bible and Common Prayer Book Society. The idea was originally suggested by the Rev. W. Stevens Perry, late of Portland, who drew up the synopsis, and to whom the Society is indebted for assistance and counsel in carrying out the project, and giving to it much of its efficiency and utility.

The thanks of the Society are due, and are most cordially tendered to him, and also to the bishops and clergy who so kindly participated in the course.

As it was found impracticable to obtain two of the sermons, their places have been supplied with others, thus rendering the book, we trust, none the less valuable and interesting.

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Sermons on the Liturgy.

SERMON I.

UNIVERSALITY AND PRIMITIVE AUTHORITY OF A LITURGY.

FRANCIS VINTON, D. D.

ACTS, ii., 42—"And they continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers."

THE first fruits of the day of Pentecost, when the Apostles were filled with the Holy Ghost, were, that they began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance ; that every man heard in his own language the wonderful works of God ; that they who gladly received the word were baptised, and continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine, and in the Apostles' fellowship, and in the Holy Communion of breaking of bread, and in common prayers. Such was the beginning of the Catholic Church of Christ. Such was its continuance for ages afterwards. Such, my brethren, it is the will of God, the Church shall be, "alway even unto the end of the world," until the Lord Jesus shall appear again, at His second Advent, to gather unto Himself His elect, and to judge the earth. It is true that Ananias and Sapphira, Simon

Magus and others, whose hearts were not right in the sight of God, and who had, therefore, neither part nor lot in the matter, were enrolled among Christians. These are the chaff amidst the wheat, which the Lord will winnow with His fan. These are the tares, which the angels shall gather into bundles for the everlasting burning. But while the Church of Christ shall contain the hypocrite and the ungodly among its true saints, at the same time the work of the Holy Ghost goes on, and believers are multiplied, who, like the first disciples, shall continue stedfastly to adhere to the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and shall be united to Christ and to one another in common Sacraments and common Worship.

That branch of the Catholic Church, which early after the beginning extended to England, whence we derive the Faith and Worship and Apostleship of Christianity, was completely purified from the corruptions of Rome ; and the Liturgy was restored to that primitive pattern, which, for the first three centuries after Pentecost, prevailed throughout the Universal Church.

Three hundred years ago the people in England were enabled to worship God in their own tongue ; to confess the Apostles' doctrine as their faith ; to witness their fellowship with Apostles in the Church's ministry ; to break the Eucharistic bread together in the pure Communion ; and to unite with one accord in common prayers. The great Reformation was then completed. The restoration of the Church to her

heritage was consummated. The Common Prayer-Book was completed and established in our language ; which being done, it has guided the devotions of ten generations of our fellow-men, trained them in the life of piety, and prepared them for the Church triumphant ; while it has elicited encomiums from others, who, not being born Churchmen, were reared in dissenting ranks, yet confessed that “the Evangelical purity of its sentiments, the chastened fervor of its devotions, and the majestic simplicity of its language, have combined to place it in the very first rank of uninspired compositions.”

The theme allotted to me in the Introductory Lecture is the Universality and Primitive Authority of a Liturgy. I propose, therefore, to embrace this opportunity of acquainting you with the principles and history of our Book of Common Prayer.

The *principles* of our Prayer-Book are those of Holy Scripture. Nine-tenths of all that is contained therein is the very words of the Bible. The remainder, for the most part, is the composition of holy men of old, collected from the primitive Liturgies in use in both the Eastern and Western Church.

The principle which distinguishes our worship from the sects around us, is, that it is a *common* worship, made common by being pre-composed and set forth in a Form. It is impracticable to enjoy congregational and common worship, except by means of a Prayer-Book. Extemporaneous prayers from a minister are *forms* to the people who hear them, and

often become *forms* in him who makes them. But these are forms in which all may not intelligently join, and to which many would scruple to say, Amen. For who could join in extemporaneous singing? What community, professing to be Christians, does not prepare beforehand its hymns, and print them in a book for the people's use? And yet these same persons are bold to say, that praying from a book is not spiritual praying! Then it follows, that singing from a book is not spiritual singing.

The truth is, that the book is innocent, but the heart alone is guilty, when our worship is not spiritual. As St. Paul enjoins the Church to sing with the spirit, and to sing with the understanding also; so he bids us pray with the spirit, and pray with the understanding also. Accordingly a Liturgy for Divine Worship is the ordained and universal means of both common prayer and praise in the Church of Christ. The Worship of the Temple was, by the express command of God, liturgical. The Psalms of David are the inspirations of the Holy Ghost for this very thing, and formed a part of the Liturgy in the public worship of both God's elder and later people. The worship of the Synagogue was liturgical. John Baptist likewise prepared a form of prayers for his disciples. And the Lord Jesus not only worshipped according to the Liturgy of the Jews, but set forth a comprehensive Form for the perpetual use of His disciples. The Apostles and brethren, we are told, lifted up their voices with one accord in common prayer. St. Paul alludes to the common

Amen in the Church at Corinth, and the custom of exhorting one another in psalms responsively. He, moreover, deprecates the irregularity and confusion occasioned by extemporaneous utterances in the Church. In his Epistle to St. Timothy, he prescribes the topics of prayer which that Apostle should set forth to the Church in Ephesus. And in heaven, St. John reports that he heard the responsive worship—ten thousand times ten thousand voices, like the voice of many waters. He saw the living creatures now bending low, now standing, before the throne of God ; the elders, the saints, the angels, answering with articulate voice and music by turns, and emulating each other in the glad diapason of homage and adoration unto Him who sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb.

The worship of the primitive Church was in conformity to this heavenly pattern. “How strange it would seem in heaven, if a single saint were to rise and do the praying, or the praising, for the rest ! How strange to heavenly minds, to discern our congregations on earth sitting or standing mute ; or uttering their devotions in such feeble tones, as if they were ashamed of themselves in being caught in vocal adoration of the Most High God !”

Inasmuch, then, as the principles of our Prayer-Book accord, in words and spirit, with the Holy Scriptures, it behooves us all to adopt and use them, heartily and with lifted voices, fearing, lest despising them, we be found at last “despising not man, but God.”

Let me proceed to show the *universality* of Liturgic

worship, and to sketch the history of the Prayer-Book. From what has been said, you are prepared to learn that some form of Liturgy was used in the first ages of the Christian Church. And this is true. There are now extant the ancient Liturgies of Apostolic Churches. There are fragments and quotations from lost Liturgies in the writings of the fathers. As the Holy Communion was celebrated on each Lord's day, being, as we learn from Holy Scripture, the chief object of Christians assembling together, so most of the extant Liturgies are the ancient Communion offices. These all substantially agree in doctrine, varying only in the order of divine worship, and in expression, according to the authority of the several Bishops in their respective Dioceses, or in their assembled Councils. "The exercise of this power, either individually or collectively, accounts for the variations which we find in the Liturgies now extant, while their substantial agreement is accounted for by their being originally derived from the same model."

The following are the Liturgies preserved among us to the present day. The *Oriental Liturgy*, which, as its name imports, was established in the Eastern Churches of India, Asia Minor and Greece. The *Alexandrian* was the Liturgy in Alexandria as well as in other parts of Egypt, in Abyssinia, and the countries along the Mediterranean shores westward. The *Roman Liturgy* obtained throughout Italy, Sicily and Carthage, and its environs in Africa. The *Gallican Liturgy* prevailed in France and Spain and England.

The enemies of our Church have taken pains to impress the Christian mind with the idea, that the Church in England owes its origin to the Church of Rome. It would matter little if this allegation were not false, provided we should have obtained from Rome her primitive faith and practice, the praise of which was in all the Churches. But the averment is not true. It is uttered, we presume, as the cob-web, to catch the floating prejudices for detraction's nourishment and venom.

It is clear from the testimony of unquestionable documents, that the religion of Christ had been preached in the British Isles, by St. Paul as supposed, and by Missionaries from the East; Aristobulus, the companion of St. Paul being one of the first Bishops; and that many converts were baptized, and Bishops and Priests ordained, at a very early period—as early, indeed, as the year of our Lord 64.

At the Council of Arles, three British Bishops subscribed their names. This Council assembled in the year 314, eleven years before the Council of Nice. The names of twenty-eight Bishops and their Sees, in Britain, are preserved in the chronicles of those times.

The Pagan Saxons persecuted the Church, and in the year 303, St. Alban, the first British martyr, suffered. The names of many other martyrs are preserved in the annals of Bede and Gildas. “During this persecution, the Churches were demolished, the holy vessels carried off, Christians were cruelly murdered, and every indignity was offered to their persons.”

In the year 429, Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre, and Lupus, Bishop of Troyes, being sent into Britain, on a mission against the heresy of Pelagianism, (the denial of original sin,) brought with them the *Gallican* Liturgy, which differed from that in use at Rome.

“In the following century, 578, the Saxons, by repeated victories, had obtained possession of nearly the whole of England. As their conquests extended, they established their own heathenism, and drove the Church into Wales, Cornwall and Cumberland, where the Saxons had been unable to penetrate.

The Church remained in this depressed state for several years, when, in the year 596, Gregory the Great despatched Augustine, the Monk, into England, to attempt the conversion of its Saxon conquerors. The intelligent Churchman is well acquainted with the history of his success. It is not my purpose to recount those events. It is to the point, however, that Augustine was well received by the British Bishops; that he had several conferences with them; and that he wrote to Pope Gregory for instructions “how he should treat with the British Bishops.” Two points of controversy hence arose: The first, touching the Supremacy of the Pope; the second, touching the method and time of keeping Easter. The British Bishops consented to allow to the Bishop of Rome a preëminence of dignity and honor, as occupying a Chief See in the Imperial City. But they utterly repudiated the idea that he had any right of jurisdiction out of his Diocese in Italy. Their scruples were respected for awhile. By

Gregory they were verified. He preferred no such claim, but has left on record these words, "that if any Bishop should pretend to be the Universal Bishop, he would be an usurper of the prerogatives of the Lord Jesus, and become an Antichrist."

The controversy about Easter was occasioned by the different method and time of keeping the feast in the East and West. As the British Church had received the Apostleship, so also it had received its Liturgy and customs from the East. And hence, this very controversy goes to prove the existence of the British Church prior to the mission of Augustine, and its Eastern origin and independence of Rome. The three Liturgies which now obtained use in Great Britain were the Oriental, the Gallican, and, after Augustine's consecration to the See of Canterbury, the Roman. In the course of the following ten centuries, the encroachments of Rome grew more and more severe, till her usurpation became prevalent. And this brings us to the reign of Henry the Eighth. You are aware of the domestic reasons which prevailed with this King to cast off the Papal yoke. It was an instance in Divine Providence wherein "the wrath of man was made to praise God."

Henry the Eighth died the 28th of January, 1547. The accession of his son, Edward VI., gave fresh hopes and encouragement to the advocates of the Reformation. Cranmer was Edward's sponsor at his baptism; his tutor; and, by the will of his father, one of Henry's executors. In the first year of Edward's reign, the Convocation of the Bishops and Clergy of the Church

in England demanded the reform of the Liturgy, which was in Latin, and much polluted with the superstitions of Romanism. In the following year the King appointed Cranmer, Ridley, and five other Bishops, with six distinguished divines, to undertake this work. "In entering upon this important undertaking," says the historian, "Cranmer and his associates proceeded with that wisdom and prudence which characterized all their proceedings. It was their wish, according to their commission, to retain whatever was sanctioned by Scripture and by the primitive Church." Their object was *not to innovate*, but to remove innovations, and restore the Liturgy to its primitive pattern. "Nothing was further from their thoughts than the presumptuous notion of composing an entirely *new* form of public devotion."

Cranmer's next object was to restore the English Liturgy to the English language. For eight hundred years the service of the ancient Church was performed in the vernacular or common tongue of every country.

The arrogant and imperious Hildebrand was the first Pope who determined that the Liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church should be performed everywhere in Latin. To most worshippers, *then as now*, in that communion, the worship was in an unknown tongue. The Bible, too, was in Latin, and hidden from the people. As the reformed worship was in strict accordance with Holy Scripture, the next object of Cranmer was to translate the Bible into English.

It will be appropriate and interesting to note, by the way, the efforts of the Reformers in this great work.

About the year 1380, Wickliffe had translated the Bible from the Latin version. This translation was circulated by manuscript copies, of which the cost of one was forty pounds. It was very instrumental in preparing the people for the reformation of the Church in England, which was one hundred and fifty years afterward. The first *printed* English version was given to the world by William Tindal.

In 1535, the whole Bible was translated and printed, in folio, by Miles Coverdale, afterwards Bishop of Exeter. By the command of Edward, every church was required to have this Bible laid open in the choir or chancel, for every man that would to look and read therein.

In 1537, another edition of the English Bible was printed and set forth by King Edward's license. It bore the name of Thomas Matthew, "for reasons of prudence." But it was edited, at the command of Cranmer, by John Rogers, a learned academic and canon of St. Paul's. Rogers is he who, first among the Reformers, sealed his faith with his blood, at the stake, in Smithfield, in the reign of Queen Mary.

"It was wonderful," says Strype, "to see with what joy this book was received. Every one that could bought the book, and busily read it or heard it read; and many elderly persons learned to read on purpose."

In 1538, this Bible was revised, and Cranmer wrote the preface, whence it obtained the name of Cranmer's Bible. This is the edition from which the Psalms, the Epistles and Gospels in the first Prayer-Book of Edward

VI. were taken—our present version of the Bible not being then in existence. These notes are important, as showing you the connection between our Liturgy and God's Word; and they will explain the reason of the difference between the versions of the Psalms in the Prayer-Book and the Bible.

In the year 1548, Cranmer and his associates completed the office of the Holy Communion, reforming it from the gross idolatries and superstitions of the Missal or Mass-Book of the Romish Church. Many of the Collects (so called because collected from the doctrines of the Epistle and Gospel, and containing the collected prayers of the people) were changed, particularly those of the Saints' days. But most of those for the Sundays, being without blemish, were retained, having been derived from the ancient Church, and appropriated to the same Sundays and Holy Days for one thousand two hundred years. How excellently this work was done has been forcibly and justly said, in allusion to the Reformers' use of the ancient Liturgies: "These helps they did not disdain, while they showed themselves able to improve them, correcting what was objectionable in doctrine, removing what was offensive in taste, and often communicating, by some happy expression, even an additional glow of devotion to passages in themselves (it might have been thought) too beautiful to touch; for in the whole compass of English literature, many as are the excellent versions of ancient writings which it can boast, it would be in vain to look for any specimens of translation (merely to put the

case thus) so vigorous, so simple, so close, and yet so free from all constraint, as are afforded by the offices of our Church."

This first Prayer-Book of Edward VI. is substantially the same which we now have.

In the same year, a new commission was issued to the same divines, Cranmer and Ridley and their associates, directing them to prepare a complete Collection of Divine Offices for Public Worship. They met at Windsor, in May, 1548, and drew up a Book of Common Prayer in English. For the occasional offices they were much indebted to the Liturgy of Nuremberg, which Melancthon and Bucer had compiled for the German Protestants. The Prayer-Book was approved by Convocation, and ratified by Parliament in the ensuing January. It was enjoined to be used for all divine offices, from the Feast of Whitsun-day following, in the year of our Lord 1549.

Thus were our fathers enabled to worship God in the tongue in which they were born, according to the faith once delivered to the Saints, whole and undefiled.

The four marks of the Catholic Church begun at Pentecost have been maintained in the Church of England, and thence transmitted to the Church in this country, where we continue to this day in the Apostles' doctrine, and in the Apostles' fellowship, and in the Holy Communion of breaking of bread and in COMMON PRAYER.

The universality and primitive authority of our Liturgy is exemplified in the history of the Prayer-

Book, and witnessed in the daily worship of the Protestant Episcopal Church in these United States.

Thanks be to GOD for His unspeakable gift. It is ours to diffuse, not ours selfishly to retain, or grudgingly to withhold. The cry of our soldiers, from the barracks, from the hospitals, from the field, implores of us the Prayer-Book. The call "out of the deep" comes to us from our seamen on shipboard. All classes of our fellow-men, in this distracted age, demand of us the charity of the Church's Prayers.

Sermons on the Liturgy.

SERMON II.

SPIRITUALITY OF THE LITURGY.

F. D. HUNTINGTON, D. D.

ST. JOHN, iv., 29—"They that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

THE welcome duty appointed me is to demonstrate and illustrate the *Spirituality* of our Book of Prayer. The fountain of spirituality is the Spirit of God. When the Commissioners of the Convocation of the Church of England, in 1548, had completed the Prayer Book of Edward VI, which is the basis of our own, gathering from the ancient and primitive liturgies, from breviaries, and rituals, and writings of the Fathers "whatever they found consonant to the doctrine of Scripture and the worship of the early Christian Churches," and sifting out many erroneous and strange elements that the Papal pretensions had foisted in ; after the Archbishops, Bishops, and Clergy of both the two provinces of York and Canterbury had given their revision and sanction to the work ; after men who were martyrs and confessors, after faith and patience,

learning and piety had stamped their bright superscription upon it; then the King and the three estates in Parliament declared their conviction, that it was through them concluded and set forth "by the aid of the Holy Ghost." They knew whereof they affirmed. That reverent acknowledgment has been ratified by the ministry which this blessed Manual has fulfilled through these three hundred years. As it has borne its perpetual testimony to the presence and power of the Paraclete, so the mighty demonstration of the Spirit has, in turn, accompanied its circulation, and made it, day and night, by its voice and its vigils, the instrument of the Church's conversation with Heaven.

Critics in oratory have counted it one of the sublimest conceptions of a modern master of their art, that he pictured, at a single stroke, the world-encompassing energy of the Empire of Great Britain, "whose morning drum-beat, following the sun, and keeping company with the hours, circles the earth with one continuous and unbroken strain of the martial airs of England." But how much loftier in sublimity, and how much grander a monument of national greatness than any military signal of the power which destroys men's lives, is this simple fact: as the earth's shadow has kept sweeping slowly round the globe, along the two advancing lines of twilight and dawn, wherever the English tongue is spoken, the daily sacrifice of our morning and evening prayer has "bowed down successive crowds of worshippers upon their knees;" so that perhaps there has not been an hour of day or night,

since that month of May, in the second year of Edward's reign, when, from some high temple, or lowly chapel, or family group, or chamber of sickness, or dying bed, or closet whose door was shut, these immortal confessions, supplications and praises have not been ascending !

In the trembling times of war and famine, when the trumpet of fasting was blown in Zion, because the day of gloominess lay thick upon the land, like a spiritual priest this volume has stood "between the porch and the altar," crying "Spare Thy people, and give not Thine heritage to reproach." In festivals of peace and prosperity, it has sent up spiritual incense for the joy of all the sons and daughters of the Church ; for her man-servants and her maid-servants, and even for the stranger and the fatherless within her gates. It has caused homesick and hungry prodigals—prodigal in sensual indulgence, prodigal in intellectual self-will, prodigal in a Pharisee's pride—to arise and go in spiritual repentance to their Father. It has healed those that had no health in them, till their spiritual "flesh came again, like the flesh of a little child." It has brought into the way of spiritual truth millions of "such as had erred or were deceived." Those cast down in "troubles and adversities," being bound in affliction and iron, and in the sighing of a contrite heart, it has brought spiritually up again, by its merciful promises, "hurt by no persecutions" from "the craft or subtilty of the devil or man," helping them evermore to "give thanks in God's holy Church." In those that

have backslidden or grown cold it has spiritually renewed whatever hath been decayed by satanic fraud and malice, or carnal frailness. Such as were ready to despair because the "burden" of their sin was "intolerable," it has lifted into spiritual light, cheering them with its peaceable offices of absolution, pledging pardon, confirming and strengthening from the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who never desired the death of the vilest or guiltiest sinner in the world. And wheresoever two or three have gathered together, on any spot under the sun, in the Saviour's name, at its call, there it has repeated the comforting assurance that a *present* Saviour will grant their requests—an assurance which is the very life of all spiritual sacrifices.

These are outlines only of those "mighty works" which have shown themselves forth in this brave witness to "the Word made flesh," ever since it rose from the dead mediæval superstitions, as before the Romish Herod touched it. Through the ages all along, wherever the path of the Prayer-Book can be traced, the fruits of *the Spirit* have sprung up in their sweetness and beauty. There the seven-fold gifts, lightening with celestial fire, have imparted

"Their blessed unction from above,
Their comfort, life and fire of love."

There spiritual things have been "spiritually discerned." There the Father has blessed His people with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. There regenerate souls, born anew of water and of the

Holy Ghost, have stood fast in one spirit, with one mind, in the same martyr-temper which first, under the bloody Mary, wrote out the precious prayers, and in one confessor clasped the book to his breast in the flames. There believers have been “built up a *spiritual house*,” on the “foundation of prophets and apostles,” “Jesus Christ being the chief corner-stone,” the members united together in Him by that which every joint supplieth. There they have both spoken to themselves, and admonished one another, in those psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with which this Book so resounds, from end to end, that it seems as if King David himself, with his harp in his hand, penitent and exultant, type of the Great Head of the mourning and triumphant Bride that was to come, must have stood by and sang, while the parts were fitted together in their harmony. There, above all, do the blessed company of faithful people, while yet in the wilderness-pilgrimage of the world, eat of the same spiritual meat, and drink of the same spiritual rock, and that rock is Christ.

I have brought forward, as the first proof of this spirituality in our Liturgy, the evident presence and operation of that Holy Spirit from whom all good gifts do come, in the minds and breasts of the framers and penmen of the Book, as certified ever since in the spiritual results of its use. God forbid that man should boast of any work of man ! Nevertheless, it is not too much to say—while deploring the unfaithfulness of so many of us to whom this trust has been committed—

that the true type of piety which this training and worshipping nurtures—prayer-book piety—has in it a certain union of richness and mellowness, refinement and constancy, animation and courage, candor and naturalness, depth, and width, and strength, which make it preëminently what St. Paul declares when he says, “To be spiritually minded is life and peace.”

It ought to be mentioned also, in passing, as a real though not a principal element of spirituality in the prayers of the Prayer-Book, that they are written prayers, prepared with forethought, and, in their language, familiar to the mind of the person praying. Because it is this, and nothing short of this, which can set the spiritual faculties wholly free for their appropriate work in the act of devotion. It is this which disengages all those inferior ingredients that bring themselves into what is popularly called worship—all intellectual entertainment and criticism, all the pleasures and disgusts of taste, all surprises, wonderments and apprehensions at the choice of an extemporizer’s expressions—drops all these clear out of mind, and leaves the worshipper but a single occupation—that of sending up his own soul as an offering on these wings, which are then as free as they are familiar, and which have been lifting the Church below into communion with the Church above ever since the Apostle called them both “one family.”

Thus the liturgy lays its chief stress on *the spirit*. It substitutes the deliberate product of the sanctified wisdom of fifty generations of spiritual saints for the

crude composition of one extemporizing mind. It prays preëminently with the understanding and the spirit together, as inspiration directs ; it makes all ready with the understanding, and then hearkens while the Spirit says, "Give me thine heart." It prays as the Saviour himself prayed in the agonies of the Garden, "*saying the same thing*;" and this is a part of its spirituality.

We must turn, however, next, directly into the contents of the volume itself, to seek evidences of this spirituality there. And, first, a proof of that spirituality lies in the fact of its Scripturalness. It is estimated that not less than nine-tenths of the book is in those very words of inspiration which, not man's wisdom, but the Holy Ghost has recorded.* If the Bible is a spiritual book, then the "Common Prayer" *must* be a spiritual book. In fact, the prayers of the Prayer-Book are little else but the Bible, so far modified as to turn it into a form of public devotions. It would seem as if two questions were ever present to the minds of its compilers: the one, "Can each given petition be expressed in Scriptural phraseology?" and the second, "If it cannot be, what expression will be most Scripture-like, in dignity, in simplicity, in fervor, in that nameless element of majesty and grace combined, which no literary criticism was ever able to analyze?" We have Scripture in the sentences, in the confession and in the absolution, till, after the Scripture words of forgiveness, we dare to say the Scriptural

* See an ingenious work by the Rev. Benjamin Hale, "Scriptural Illustrations of the Daily Service," &c. Buffalo: 1856.

“Our Father who art in Heaven ;” Scripture in the versicles and the chants ; Scripture in the lessons and hymns ; Scripture in the creed ; Scripture in the petitions, intercessions and thanksgivings ; Scripture in each of the special offices, and in the benediction, to the end. And, furthermore, the case is stronger ; for, since the entire Bible could not be transferred bodily to this smaller compass, the compilers have chosen out and set together, in a wonderful order, what we may, without presumption, call the more spiritual portions of the Scriptures, for the practical edification of the Church ; so that we have here the very essence of biblical spirituality—in short, familiar, concentrated formularies of holy thought and feeling.

But the Scriptures themselves, inspired as they are, are not the original fountain-head of man’s spiritual life. They only lead us to Him. They only uncover the glory of His face. Living oracles, they are yet alive only with the life they borrow from Him, and so become the Church’s imperishable repetition of his gospel of redemption. To the Eternal Sun of righteousness, who is the True Light of the world, they are as the atmospheric medium which brings down the beams of that absolute splendor, distributes them over the planet, and makes up the shining and the warmth of the genial climate that we breathe. Turning back, then, from the open Word to the Prayer-Book, which ought ever to lie by its side—in the inner temple of our affections, as it lies in the outer temple before the altar—shall we miss the same central, distinct image

of the Christ, our Saviour, there? Shall we miss the Prophet, Priest and King—Christ, the Son of Mary and Son of God—Christ, the Lord of the first and of the second advent—Christ, the Master and Leader of all the grand historic procession, from Eden to the “new earth,” and Christ indwelling in every humble heart? Do we lose sight of Him, or of any feature of His blessed countenance, so human and yet so divine, as we pass from the Inspired Book to this book uninspired, which has yet filled and bathed and saturated itself in Inspiration’s reflected light? You who know what it is, who use it, who love it as you love your mother’s voice and hand; you who have looked on its clear portraiture of the Good Shepherd giving his life for the sheep, ever since you met Him at the font, and saw how “by His outward gesture and deed He declared His good will” toward you, and showed you “out of His most precious side both water and blood,” and buried you then by baptism in His death—you will only wonder at the question. You know that the Prayer-Book is an unceasing celebration of the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world and is to be worshipped forever as “worthy,” because he was slain. You know that from the cry for pardon, in the General Confession, *for His sake*, at the opening of the service, on to the promise of His perpetual presence “wherever two or three are gathered together,” at the end, the whole daily office places us in penitence at His feet, and bids us look up for our only hope into His face. You know how the solemn closing of every collect recalls us

to the faith that He is the only "Way" to the Mercy-Seat. You know how, from the creed, which is a recital of the simple facts of His mediation, and which is the very heart of the whole book, out to the utmost extremities of the system, the Burden-Bearer of our sins, with the cross upon Him, is the ever-present subject—even the dry figures of the calendar making the year one bright round of commemorations of the biography of His incarnation, hallowing all our time with His name, and turning the "valley of Baca" of the barrenest and bleakest life among us into a well of springing waters of spiritual comfort, with fruits of the Tree of Life yielded there every day of every month. The spirituality of the Prayer-Book is the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

Let us carry this line of thought farther and deeper still. While it is the distinguishing doctrine of our Church, that the Saviour's incarnation is always to be received, and always to be presented, as an undivided whole, including his prophetic or teaching office with the sacrificial or priestly, and the royal, *i. e.*, his eternal headship and living presence over the body, and within every believer's heart, with both the others, at the same time we are agreed with the great evangelical company of all names in placing *foremost* that one propitiatory work, His sacrifice, on which every sinner's salvation supremely depends. All the spiritualities of our religion centre in the Cross. It is from the Saviour's death that they live. It is from the blood-red soil of Calvary that they arise, clean and white, in the

linen which is the righteousness of saints ; and thither they have to return to replenish their strength. And therefore the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, whereby we show forth the Lord's death till He come, being at once the Eucharistic celebration of that sacrifice, and also a means of representing and continuing His present spiritual power in his disciples, becomes the chief act of all Christian worship.

Notice now two remarkable facts, which hardly seem to have been set together in the place they deserve in the spiritual history of our Liturgy. In the primitive, Apostolic Church, from which nearly all the liturgic parts of the Prayer-Book are derived, the whole service of public worship grew up around the Sacrament of the Supper, and referred to that as the great visible reality which the Church had to preserve. When the disciples came together, on the first day of the week, to break bread, they prayed and sang the Psalter and heard the word. Properly speaking, and as a matter of history, the Liturgy was the spoken office of prayer and praise, offered in connection with the taking of the Body and Blood of the Holy Communion, spiritually discerned. The term was gradually extended to cover the daily worship, where no visible feast was spread. Observe now farther this striking historic coincidence. At the time of the Reformation, when those same primitive usages, which had been corrupted by Rome, were to be restored, and the superstitious rubbish of the Mass and Missal was to be swept away, as by a gale of the Spirit, bringing back the simplicity that is

in Christ, it was first declared by Edward's Convocation, held just three hundred and sixteen years ago, that the Communion ought to be administered in both kinds, the cup as well as the bread, to all the people. This was the first act. Then, as the second step, and following necessarily upon that, came the appointment of a committee of "Bishops and other learned divines," holding its session in Windsor Castle, "to compose an uniform order of Communion, according to the rules of Scripture, and the use of the primitive Church." The next year, there were grouped about this, on the same stock of the old apostolic vine, kindred offices, "not only for Sundays and holy days, but for baptism, confirmation, matrimony, burial of the dead, and other special occasions," all receiving upon them something of the chief sanctity of the altar-service, every cluster of collects touched with that purple light.

Thus the origination of the Liturgy by the Fathers, and its restoration by the Reformers, were pieces of one work ; both had it for their chief purpose to honor the all-sufficient and sole merits of our "only Saviour, God and man, thus dying for us." Both sought to perpetuate those "holy mysteries" which He "instituted and ordained," with all "the innumerable benefits which by his precious blood-shedding he hath obtained for us," "to our great and endless comfort." Accordingly, the grand doctrine of a protestant, spiritual Christianity, justification by faith in Christ crucified, stands written out all over this communion liturgy. It is, by common consent, the most affecting, humbling, renewing,

sanctifying, inspiring service, in any language in the world. It is a compact summary of the Christian's belief. It is a perfect sermon of practical self-denial and abnegation of the world, surpassing, in its searching requirements, all the spirituality of quietists, and mystics, and saints of the "ages of faith." With its opening entreaty, "Thy will be done," with its awful appeal, in the collect, to Him "from whom no secrets are hid," for *perfect* love ; with the thunders of the commandments waking up each Christian's conscience as with the echoes of Sinai ; with the responsive supplications of the people that the heart, and not the lips and hands only, may keep them ; with the two-fold law of love which no obedience ever overtook ; with the sharp practical test of that charity, coming suddenly in at the offertory, to prove whether we are only saying "Lord, Lord," without doing the will as we had just prayed it might be done, or not ; with its large supplications for the unity and holiness of all human hearts, widening out to the width of the whole state of Christ's Church Militant ; with its renewed call, after the previous warnings, to self-examination and self-judgment, so that we be "not judged of the Lord ;" with that bewailing confession which searches out every corner of the soul, and exposes its insufferable wickedness ; with its new promise of forgiveness, bringing peace after the alarm ; with the comfortable words of the Saviour's own invitation ; with the intermingling ascriptions of the Church below, and "all the company of Heaven," both branches of the one family in Christ,

giving the thrice-holy praise for redemption together ; with the lowly cry of unworthiness for clean bodies and washed souls by an indwelling Saviour ; with its consecrating ascription for the "full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice," and its sublime oblation and tender invocation ; with its hymns of grateful praise ; with its individual appeal to the inmost spirit, accompanying the bread and the wine ; with its Christ-taught petitions and thanksgivings, ascending and swelling into the magnificent adoration of the *Gloria in Excelsis*, and gently falling afterwards into the sure and satisfying Benediction of Peace ; answer now, what chord of sacred feeling, what emotion of piety, what element of holy character, what expectation of hope, what yearning of love, what assurance of faith, is not drawn in and bound to the cross with Christ, and then lifted upward with His ascended form, till, being risen with Him, the soul sits in heavenly places, and walks, refreshed, with Him even here on earth, in newness of spiritual life ?

Quite another line of proof, tending to the same conclusion, is opened by looking into the elements of a spiritually minded character, analyzing it, and seeing how far the ministrations of the Liturgy compare with the acknowledged characteristics of a saintly life. That which the most universal Christian judgment would undoubtedly mention first of all is *unworldliness* : *i. e.*, an inward frame withdrawn from the passions, competitions, allurements, the fashions and the fascinations of a worldly society. Open the book on that single

criterion. Follow the order of your own life, as a child of God in his family. Whatever your life now, this winter, in this city, there *was* a moment when, under the most solemn sanctions drawn from eternity and judgment, you promised at the Font, "I renounce them all, and by God's help will endeavor not to follow nor be led by them." It was a Prayer-Book promise. God was listening when those vows were spoken. You said, "by God's help" you "would endeavor." God did help, but did you "endeavor?" What were the things you renounced? "The vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same." Oh, when will the church bring its catechism and its conscience together? You came to confirmation. Then, not like some dead echo of a buried past, but in all the vital intensity of a newly awakened and present earnestness, God and the congregation witnessing, you said, "I do renew the solemn vow that I made, or that was made for me, in my baptism." And what human supplication ever bore its subjects farther above all worldly bondage and pollution than the Bishop's Confirmation-Prayer? You proceeded to the Lord's Supper, and what spot of sincere or unparalyzed sensibility in your heart was not smitten by those accusing sentences of the exhortation, where the arms of the Saviour seem to be alternately stretched out in invitation, and lifted in judgment, *towards* the true penitent heart, trembling as it approaches, or *over* the light dissembler who advances to claim the feast unworthily? Turn to the Litany: just as contrary, the one to the other, as the

law of the members and the law of the mind, or flesh and spirit, or mammon and Heaven, are a worldly life and these self-renouncing, spiritual petitions. I know of but three ways for a devotee of money, or ambition, or pleasure, to read the Litany: he must think of something else while he reads, or he must be a hypocrite, or he must be a penitent and a new man in Christ Jesus. Move through the Collect-circle of the Christian year. Enter into the depths of that first unworldly prayer which lingers on our lips through all the Advent weeks, that sharp sundering of the great armies of Christ and Belial, the parting of spiritual darkness and light, the girding on of his armor by the good soldier of the cross, and through the rent heavens the vision of the throne at the Last Day. Out of eighty-three regular collects, forty-nine make some immediate reference to this mortal conflict between the world and the spirit—the powers engaged in it, the heavenly helps that succor it, the warfare, the race, the victory. They belt the Christian soldier about as they do the Christian year, with this armor of prayer against the flesh, the world and the devil. Read through the office for the visitation of the sick. What plainer words of godly admonition can be conceived; what more expressly adapted to clear away all the falsehoods of a self-righteous and insecure hope, and to bring the guilty soul to cast itself wholly on the meritorious sacrifice of Jesus, than the words which bid the sick man accuse and condemn himself for his own faults, that he may find mercy for Christ's sake, and not be accused

and condemned in that fearful judgment ; than pointing him to the dying Advocate who "Himself went not up to joy, but first He suffered pain, entering not into His glory before He was crucified ?" If anybody thinks the Church too lenient in her Burial Service, as if the presumption were there too large on the final mercy, he will at least have to confess, that so long as the living are yet alive, within the reach of her call to repentance, she is faithful to their souls. She may shrink from uttering sentences of condemnation over their graves, seeing that they are already in the hands of Him that judgeth righteously ; but she does not cease to follow them with the terrors of the Lord, even to the grave's edge, and while they have ears to hear.

On the other hand, the spirituality of the Prayer-Book is not an ascetic or morbid spirituality. It does not despise common duties or common pleasures. It does not revile the fair earth and sky which God, the Lover of beauty and joy, has made. It will have no cant, no extravagance, no fanaticism, no Phariseeism, no disfiguring of the face, or whining accents, in its sweet, simple piety. Unworldly as it is, it is no monk or anchorite, and it prays, like its Lord and Master, "not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil."

Indeed, nothing in this cast of spirituality impresses him that studies it more than its admirable proportioning, or balancing, of the qualities of living saintliness, in its standard of Christian character. It leans neither to the one extreme nor to another, seeking to make

the disciples "perfect and entire, wanting nothing," that all may come unto "the stature of a perfect man." Thus I have spoken especially of the sacrificial system, lying at the foundation, and interwoven with all its parts. But, directly at the side of that, running through all its ordinances, is a practical system, a system of Church-work, standing forth not only in the offertory, opening our hands to Him whose are the silver and the gold, but breathing a very humane and charitable tone into the prayers themselves, bravely stirring up the wills of all faithful people to bring forth plenteously the fruit of good works, and carefully reminding the contemplative, the dogmatical, and the sentimental, that all their doings, "without charity are nothing worth." So there is in this Prayer-Book, wonderfully wrought into its texture, a perfect penitential system, bringing down pride upon its knees, humbling all high thoughts and high looks, making the most exemplary Christian feel himself sick and sore, and diffusing something of the sadness of the Lenten Confessions through almost all the compilation. But then, parallel with that again, and furnishing beautiful alternatives of relief to its wailing *miserere*, is the Laudatory system, catching up the spirit, how often! into the third heavens of praise, springing with jubilant exultation to movements of celestial joy, and making the Church below glad in Him to whom the angels cry aloud. Nothing can be more unqualified than its constant inculcation of dependence upon God; but nothing can be more explicit than its requirement

of personal toil and sacrifice. There is no height of sanctification or of holy assurance to which the regenerate and ripened soul can rise, where this soaring worship does not keep it company, and even go before, still lifting it nearer to the great White Throne. There is no Valley of Humiliation, however abject, where these sympathizing supplications do not move tenderly along beside the stricken spirit, to comfort and to cheer. They dwell on the "promises that exceed all that we can desire," and the "good things that pass man's understanding." They remind us, at the same time, that we are, in ourselves, but "vile earth and miserable sinners." Well might Jeremy Taylor exclaim, "There is no part of religion but is in the offices of the Church of England."*

* "When Herbert lay upon the pillow of a death-bed, he was visited by a clergyman sent by one of his nearest and dearest friends, to give him spiritual consolation, and to carry away a true report of his bodily health and state of mind. 'Sir,' said the dying Saint to him, 'I see by your habit that you are a priest, and I desire you to pray with me.' And when the question was put in answer, 'What prayers?' he exclaimed, 'O sir, the prayers of my mother the Church of England, no other prayers are equal to them! but this time I beg you to pray only the Litany, for I am weak and faint.' "

"Baxter lived to the age of seventy-six, and his life was a zealous warfare against bishops and liturgies; yet when he was approaching the portals of the eternal world, candor drew from him the following remarkable confession. 'And now,' he says, 'it is the fundamental doctrines of the Catechism which I most highly value, and daily think of, and find most useful to myself and others. The Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, do find me now the most acceptable and plentiful matter for all my meditations. They are to me as my daily bread and drink; and as I can speak and write of them over and over again, so I had rather read or hear of them, than of any of the

Other marks of this spirituality come to light, the further we press our investigation. So, for example, the *motives* to a Christian life, which are set into the greatest prominence throughout these services, are the great evangelical motives, and the noblest that can nerve men to action ; not earthly honor, not individual happiness, not mere exemption from danger or torture, not a bare escape from the agonies of a physical hell, not any refined religious selfishness ; but gratitude, love, trust toward the Saviour for his inestimable benefits, a self-renouncing discipleship, devotion to the divine kingdom among men, the honor of God's everlasting name, goodness for its own blessed sake ; all that is highest, grandest, purest in human breasts ; all that is most disinterested and exalting in the disinterested Gospel—*spiritual* motives. The Prayer-Book never puts the Christian back under the bondage and dryness of a dispensation of law, but keeps him up and leads him on out of legal littleness into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, wherewith Christ makes His people free. When it repeats the Mosaic commandments, it is in close connection with the new commands of love, with prayers of forgiveness and the Eucharistic consolation. The Liturgy never judaizes. It is not a "letter" that killeth ; it is the vital body, rather, of the Spirit that giveth life, worshipping Him who is a Spirit in spirit and in truth.

school niceties which once so much pleased me. And thus I observed it was with old Bishop Usher and many other men.'"

The Rev. T. W. Coit, D. D.

Again, the spirit of the Liturgy is that of a perpetual growth in holiness, a going forward from strength to strength, from purity to purity, from grace to grace. Not only in that uplifting petition at the chancel-rail, in confirmation, which rings through all the chambers of the waiting heart, "that he may daily increase in Thy Holy Spirit more and more, until he come into Thine everlasting Kingdom ;" not only in such other special supplications as solicit, in language, an "increase of faith and hope and charity," but in the whole strain and urgency of its influence it turns the believer's face away from those things that are behind, and makes him to pray, not only on his knees, but while he runs, reaching forward in the race to those things that are before, amidst the cloud of witnesses, looking unto Jesus.

Further yet, while marching in that spiritual progress, the Prayer-Book Christian finds his entire inward and outward life, in all its changes, and all its perils and surprises, met and ministered to by this helper to his necessities. The Liturgy encounters him everywhere ; it warns him everywhere ; it blesses him everywhere—not only at the font, not only at confirmation, not only at wedlock, not only on the bed of his sickness and mortality, but going out and coming in, journeying by land or water, at his business, in his recreations, in his home, on the eve of battles, in all time of his tribulation, in all time of his prosperity, in the hour of death, and at the day of Judgment. It makes all time sacred, not as an empty modern philosophy

would, by a flourish of abstract sentiment, but by the practicable and Scriptural and Providential way of keeping holy days, to shed their hallowing influence over the intervals. It makes all space sacred, not by merely saying it ought to be, but by establishing holy places, teaching and disciplining men to venerate and consecrate them. This is a veritable, substantial spirituality, taking men as they are, and sanctifying them by ordinances of God's appointment. The solar system is not brightened without a sun in the centre. The world is not watered without reservoirs, seas and rivers. Sunbeams and dew-drops are from great repositories which supply them. You may abolish the distinction between Sundays and week-days, or between common houses and churches. But you will make the Sunday like other days, and the church like the market; you will *not* make the week sacred or the world holy. Our spirituality is the spirituality of God's Bible and Kingdom, as well as of the nature He has given to man, and the history He has controlled from the beginning.

How very human, too, and thus how very near and endearing and powerful, the lessons of this piety become for being impersonated and vivified by association with the great Biblical men of the Evangelic and Apostolic age! They little know what they are losing, how much of the genuine nutriment they throw away, who let the gracious provision of the Church, in her Saints' anniversaries, go by unregarded. What illustrations of *spiritual life*, in its diversified activities,

stand in the Saints' Days Collects, teaching us "perfectly and without all doubt to believe in Jesus Christ," whom we have not seen, from St. Thomas ; to "look steadfastly up to Him" in "suffering for the testimony of God's truth," from St. Stephen ; to "walk in the bright beams of light cast upon the Church," from St. John ; to "mortify and kill all vices," in purity and "constancy," from the Holy Innocents ; to "follow the Gospel's holy doctrine throughout the world," from St. Paul ; to pray for "faithful and true pastors" in all our churches, from St. Matthias ; to be "not like children carried away with every blast of vain doctrine, but established in the truth," from St. Mark ; to seek "*perfectly* to know Jesus Christ to be the way," from the first double Festival ; from those that follow to entreat singular and munificent gifts, with grace to use them after the Spirit's will ; to "constantly speak the truth, boldly rebuke vice, and patiently suffer for the truth's sake," with St. John Baptist ; to intercede for Bishops and preachers of the Word, in remembrance of St. Peter ; to "forsake all wordly and carnal affections without delay," with St. James ; to "*love* that word" which St. Bartholomew believed ; "to forsake covetous desires and an inordinate love of riches," with St. Matthew the publican ; to expect succor and defence here on earth from the wonderful orders of angels ordained of God, and ministering spirits to men, with St. Michael their Prince ; to take the wholesome "medicine" of heavenly admonition for "the diseases of our souls," at the hands of St. Luke, the physician ;

to cultivate unity of spirit, like Saints Simon and James, "on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the head corner stone;" and finally to look clearly forward, in a blessed hope, after following these and all saints in virtuous and godly living, till we come to "the communion of the elect," at the appearing of the great God and our Saviour, and to those "unspeakable joys which He has prepared for those who unfeignedly love Him." Tell me, you who have ever thought lightly of these beautiful memorials, will you find anywhere, in the book, or in any human book, a succession of thoughts, applied to life, more spiritual than these?

Finally, dropping all classifications of these elements of liturgic spirituality, I suppose it has happened to many here to discover some rich and fragrant expressions of prayer in the book, so especially suited to all the inner framework and experience of his being, that no words can tell their preciousness and power. Such, for example, is the collect for the Sixth after Trinity, with its most profound and tender entreaty, "Pour into our hearts such love toward Thee that we, *loving Thee above all things*, may obtain Thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire." Such is that for the Sunday after Ascension, with its glorious aspiration, "Exalt us unto the same place whither our Saviour Christ is gone before." Such is that of the Fifth after Epiphany, for those "who do lean only upon the hope of Thy heavenly grace;" and of the Sixth, where the grandest of all conceivable glories and beatitudes

breaks in upon the worshipper's sight as he beseeches, that "when Christ shall appear again in power and great glory, we may be made like unto Him in His eternal and glorious Kingdom." What comprehensiveness of devotion in the single clause, "that they may never cast away their confidence in Thee, nor place it anywhere but in Thee!" Can assurance venture on any bolder claim, than when it begs, "Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts that we may *perfectly* love Thee, and *worthily* magnify 'Thy holy name'?" Was ever true humility, on its knees, able to breathe upward a more Christian confession of infirmity and faith together, than this—"Those things which for our unworthiness we dare not, and for our blindness we cannot ask, vouchsafe to give us for the worthiness of Thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" ?*

* In the possession of a Christian patriot of this nation is the remaining fragment of a little Prayer-Book, torn almost to pieces, and soiled with the dust of the battle-field. The day after the fight, it was picked up by a soldier of the Ambulance Corps, as he went over the ground gathering up the wounded and the dying. Before his sad day's work was done he was lifting from the earth a poor bleeding member of the Massachusetts First, who groaned with pain and cried, "Do not move me, I am dying; only pray with me." But the helpless, thoughtless soldier did not know how to pray alone, and stood in pitying, pitiable silence. Suddenly he remembered the book, and thinking it "might be something religious," he held it up, and there, on the very first untorn leaf, he read with trembling astonishment these words:

"O most gracious Father, we fly unto Thee for mercy in behalf of this Thy servant here lying under the sudden visitation of Thine hand. If it be Thy will, preserve his life, that there may be place for repentance: But if Thou hast otherwise appointed, let Thy mercy supply to him the want of the usual opportunity for the trimming of his lamp.

Nor can any but a very dull mind and a very cold heart turn unmoved from the embalming of sweet spices which these old liturgic treasures have had, in the pious memories of the confessors and witnesses who wrote and collected them. Their spirituality is no doubt due, in great measure, to the fact that they are mostly prayers of martyr-ages, when men lived in the awful and hourly expectation of Judgment, under the solemn light foreshining from the eternal Throne,—men who would rather face the teeth of lions, or the scourges of inquisitions, than one reproachful look from God. “The very Rubrics of this Liturgy,” says Bishop Taylor, in his eloquent way, “were written (red) in the blood of some of its compilers, men famous in their generations, whose reputation and glory of martyrdom hath made it immodest for the best of men now to compare themselves with them.” Whether these prayers were lifted in the fresh morning-air of the Eastern Church, or gathered from the Sacramentary of Gregory the Great—

Stir up in him such sorrow for sin, and such fervent love to Thee, as may in a short time do the work of many days: That among the praises which Thy saints and holy angels shall sing to the honor of Thy mercy through eternal ages, it may be to Thy unspeakable glory that Thou hast redeemed the soul of this Thy servant from eternal death, and made him partaker of the everlasting life which is through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

“Every word,” he says, “seemed adapted to his case, and fixed itself on my memory. Soon after I was taken prisoner. I had nothing to do but think, and I could think of nothing but the remarkable providence which had led me to offer my first prayer for a dying man, and reflect on my own condition, unprepared to die. I could find no peace, until at length I began to pray earnestly for myself, and found pardon.”

Servus servorum Dei, as in his humility he called himself—or took form in those early Anglican periods when the cross was contending with barbarism in the forests of the North—we know certainly who the staunch Reformers were that have delivered them to us, and whether they worshipped in spirit and in truth: Ridley and May, Heynes and Goodwin, Day and Holbech, Taylor and Cox, Thirlby and Skip, Redmayne and Robertson, and at their front that mitred head of Thomas Cranmer, whose offending hand, held out first into the fire as a sacrifice for its recanting weakness, like St. Peter's alleged crucifixion with his head downward, in shame for his denial, almost makes the Church rejoice for those infirmities of nature over which the spiritual power of faith could gain so complete a victory.

Earlier yet, almost nine centuries before, in the very day-dawn of the Anglo-Saxon Church, there stood in the morning light the noble figure of the venerable Bede. I spoke just now of the Collect after Ascension. For nearly thirty years this earnest and holy scholar seems to have been occupied with a history of the Church in England, of which he is known to us as one of the fathers. This being finished, he was engaged on a translation of the Gospel of St. John into the Anglo-Saxon tongue. On the night before he died, growing feebler fast, the aged saint was told by his amanuensis,—“You seem very weak, Sir, but there remains one chapter more.” “Take your pen,” said Bede, “dip it in the ink, write as fast as you can.” Just before the last sentence was whispered he was

silent, and seemed to be gone. Rallying once more he said, "Write quickly," and then "It is finished," "*Consummatum est.*" Having requested to be placed just where he had been used to kneel, his lips moved in prayer, and they that leaned above him heard those words of our Ascension Sunday Collect, a liturgic gift from a still remoter and more venerable past: "O God, thou King of Glory, who hast exalted thine only son Jesus Christ with great triumph unto thy Kingdom in Heaven, we beseech thee, leave us not comfortless, but send us thy Holy Ghost to comfort us, and exalt us unto the same place whither our Saviour Christ is gone before ; who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end." Then he said, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost !" and "so peacefully died."

Fellow-worshippers of the Church which has been sending up these prayers, through all these wondrous centuries of suffering, and labor, and testimony, and glory, worshipping in spirit and in truth, this book is our heritage. What we have freely received, should we not as freely give ? As the Apostle wrote, looking forward as if on the verge of time, so may we say looking backward and forward also, "What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness !" To worship through a Spiritual Liturgy is our present privilege. But now, and henceforth, and till we exchange it for the ascension-vision and eternal Liturgy of Heaven, remember that "to be spiritually minded," each one with God, "is life and peace."

Sermons on the Liturgy.

SERMON III.

THE COLLECTS THE PRODUCT AND BEQUEST OF PRIMITIVE ANTIQUITY.

REV. WILLIAM STEVENS PERRY, M.A.

REVELATION, viii. 3.—“The prayers of all saints.”

IN the context to these few words we have a glimpse of the heavenly worship. The place is the immediate presence of Jehovah. The time is that in which, even in Heaven, prayer is wont to be made. The actors in the scene are God, who heareth prayer, and the angel unto whom was given the incense of the Church's devotion; and the language of inspiration is that the “angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with”—or, as the marginal reading has it, “add it to”—“the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar before the Throne. And the smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.” These words of revelation, telling of prayer in Heaven—telling of the offering of the prayers of

earth, the prayers of all saints—joining thus the devotion of the living and the dead, those of all climes, all centuries, in acceptable worship before the Throne, are not inappropriately made the theme of our discourse to-night, in which we speak of the Church's prayers as the prayers of the saints of the earlier days, and worthy, from their antiquity and the rich fervor of their devotion, to be the vehicle of worship for "all saints" in their approach to God.

Linked by their age and origin with the worthies of the past, the Collects of our Church have a history coeval with Christianity itself. They come to us not only as the priceless heritage of the Church's devotion, but they bear besides rich memories of the saints of old who penned their treasured words. And so they stand before us on the Prayer-Book page, like those glowing picture-writings of mediæval days, where each initial letter bears the portrait of some saint or martyr, and even amidst the flourishes of the transcriber's pen one may discern a legend or a commentary. Every line and word of these brief supplications have their crowding memories of the faithful dead. Each age has given us of its treasures, till the incense-wavings of our devotion are offered up, as in the heavenly Temple, "with the prayers of all saints" before the Throne. Each change, review, addition, have added to the long gallery of portraits and pictures, in which are mirrored to us the men and scenes of other days. Seabury and White from our own communion; Sanderson, Pearson, Andrews, Whitgift, Jewell, Latimer, Rid-

ley and Cranmer, of our reformed mother Church ; Austin, Gregory, Leo, Augustine and Ambrose, the foremost men of Latin Christianity ; and Chrysostom, Athanasius and Jerome of the East—these, with all the noble army of martyrs and confessors, and all the blessed company of the Apostles, speak to us through the language of our devotion in the words of these brief prayers. And so these Collects, coming down to us as they do through the eighteen Christian centuries, have indeed a history, and their words bring to us sweet associations with the saintly names of the Church's past. One that we sadly miss in our American Prayer-Book—left out, we infer, on account of the wretched criticism passed upon it by the Commissioners appointed to review the English service in 1689, as “full of strange and impertinent expressions”—tells us of him, its saintly author, whose sweet compassion for the fair-faced slave boys of far-off Britain added *works* to prayers for their loosing from the ties and bonds of the chain of their sins. It is this : “O God, whose nature and property is ever to have mercy and to forgive, receive our humble petitions ; and though we be tied and bound with the chain of our sins, yet let the pitifulness of thy great mercy loose us ; for the honor of Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Advocate.” It is from the Sacramentary of Gregory, the friend and patron of Austin, England's first missionary saint, that we receive this exquisite gem of ancient devotion. It bears the simple title, in this old Prayer-Book, of “A Collect for Sins.” A fragment of this collect is of even

older date than Gregory. It is that portion copied from the Gelasian Sacramentary, carrying its origin back nearly fourteen centuries. The words are : "*Ut quos delictorum catena constringit magnitudo Tuæ pietatis absolvat*"—that the greatness of Thy clemency may loose those whom the chain of sins has bound. The whole collect appears at the end of the "*preces*" in the Litany according to the use of Sarum, and also in the English Litany of 1544. Omitted in the books of King Edward VI., it reappears in 1559, and still holds its place among the occasional prayers of our mother Church. Another of these collects echoes to our minds the last words of the venerable Bede, who, at life's close, could look upon the completed pages of the Anglo-Saxon Gospels he had so lovingly rendered into his countrymen's tongue, and then breathe forth his soul into his Saviour's hands with the prayer we offer on each Sunday after Ascension : "*O Rex gloriæ, Domine virtutum, Qui triumphator hodie super omnes cœlos ascendisti, ne derelinquas nos orphanos, sed mitte promissum Patris in nos, Spiritum Veritatis. Alleluia.*"*—Oh, King of glory, Lord of virtues, who hast this day ascended high above the heavens, leave us not orphans, but send to us the promise of the Father, even the Spirit of Truth. Alleluia. And another still ; that for the Fifth Sunday after Trinity, dating its origin far back to those days of trouble when the Goths were knocking at the portals of the seven-hilled city, and the Church alone was the hope

* Bright's Ancient Collects, Appendix, p. 202.

of men, how is it laden with the wailings of the dying Western Empire: "Da nobis, Domine Deus noster, ut et mundi cursus pacifice nobis Tuo ordine dirigatur, et ecclesia Tuo tranquillâ devotione lætetur, Per," etc.*—Grant to us, O Lord our God, that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by Thy governance that Thy Church may joyfully serve Thee in godly quietness. And yet another—that with which we close up our daily prayer—so sweet in its pleading of the Saviour's promise to grant the desires and petitions of even the two or three gathered together in His name—how is it linked with the name of the saintly Chrysostom, and associated in our minds with the ringing notes of triumph sounding from his dying lips, as he cried out in exile and poverty his last words, "Praised be God alone."

Well has the gifted and popular historian of modern England spoken of "those beautiful Collects which have soothed the griefs of forty generations of Christians,"† as he has brought to mind the time when bigots made it "a crime in a child to read by the bedside of a sick parent one of" these hallowed compositions. And Evelyn, that genial Christian gentleman of the olden time, whose diaries have the freshness and charm of a romance united with the authority of history, how has he told us of that evil day when,

* *Vide*, "Sancti Leonis Magni Romani Pontificis Opera Omnia, post Paschasii Quesnelli Recensionem. Tomus Secundus." J. P. Migne. Parisiis, 1846. p. 84.

† Macaulay's History of England. Philadelphia, 1856. I. p. 131.

in a single chapel alone, and that not in England, but under the roof of the English ambassador in Paris, these prayers of the Church's early day were heard, and men like Jeremy Taylor, Bull, Usher, Juxton and Joseph Hall, prelates and defenders of the English Church, were silenced in prayer-desks and pulpits alike, and, exiled from home, or immured in prison, could only in stealth and sadness mingle with the cry, "How long, O Lord, how long?" these sweet petitions for grace and strength needed till this tyranny should be overpast. Thus by their associations, so manifold, so comprehensive, with the Church's past, these Collects are in very truth the "prayers of all saints"—the means of devotion of the godly in all the ages of the faith; and their annuals are not mere historic statements, but they are the poetry of ecclesiastical history, so rich and suggestive are their clinging memories since their birth in the "distant glory" of the Church's primitive days.

So old is the collect-type of prayer in the Church, that the very etymology of the term is rendered uncertain. Some have thought the word arose from the circumstance that in many cases "it is the quintessence of the practical lessons deducible from the Epistle and Gospel for the day." Others, losing sight of this idea of condensed *Scriptural* teaching as the burden of the Collect, make it the summing up of many prayers in one. This might be allowed were the Collects found at the close of our devotions. We are inclined, the rather, to find its etymology in the fact that the meet-

ings of the early Christians were usually called by the name of "Collectæ." "From hence," says Alcuin, in his book concerning the Divine Offices, "*Precationes à populi collectione collectæ appellari cœperunt*,"* "prayers by the people when collected together began to be called 'collects.' " Arianism, to which we owe the amplification of our Creeds as well as the increase of doxologies, in giving rise to many heretical compositions of the collect-type of prayer, designed, of course, to supplant the earlier and more orthodox forms, made an authorized collection of the Collects a necessity. The Council of Milevis, in the year 402, ordered that no Collects should be used in the Church which had not the approbation of a Synod.† To Leo the Great, Bishop of Rome from the year 440 to 461, we owe the first collection of these prayers now extant, in which he seems not only to have gathered together the fragmentary devotions of the past, but also to have added so much from his own pen that in default of any earlier name, we may ascribe to him the parentage of the collect-form as it has come down to us from the earliest liturgies. To the glowing pages of Dean Milman in his *History of Latin Christianity* may we refer for notices of the Christian character and temper of this old Roman Bishop who maintained the faith of Christ "on the throne of Rome alone, of all the greater sees,"

* The Book of Common Prayer, with Notes Legal and Historical. By Archibald John Stephens, Barrister at Law. Eccl. Hist. Soc., London, 1850. ii. p. 600.

† Stephens's Notes, ii. p. 600.

at this epoch in "its majesty, its sanctity, its piety,"* and that too with the same boldness and unceasing vigilance with which he strove to uphold the tottering fabric of the empire against the invading barbarians. It is true that we have not the whole of the Sacramentary attributed to St. Leo. The opening portion containing the services for nearly a third of the year from its beginning in January is wanting, and consequently the name of Leo is not found in the manuscript. But the ablest investigators of the remnants of liturgical antiquity ascribe it to him, and even those who hesitate to give him this great honor claim for it an earlier origin, as they assert "that it is not the work of one pontiff, but is the Sacramentary of the Roman pontiffs received in use from the primitive times."† Be this as it may, from the Sacramentary of this lion-hearted Bishop we derive the Collect for the third Sunday after Easter, referring evidently to the spiritual needs of those who had received Holy Baptism on Easter Even. We have it in this old service book word for word almost as we use it now. "Deus, errantes in viâ posse redire, veritatis lumen ostendis, da cunctis qui Christianâ professione censentur, et illa respuere quæ huic inimica sunt nomini, et ea quæ sunt apta sectari. Per," etc.‡

* Milman, I. chap. iv. p. 167. Eng. ed.

† *Vide* a full discussion of this subject in the second volume of the works of St. Leo the Great, republished in the Abbé Migne's edition of the Fathers. Paris, 1846.

‡ Migne's edition of the works of St. Leo, ii. p. 27, "Errantes," the Leonine form, is changed in the Gelasian, Gregorian and Roman Sacramentaries to "Qui errantibus ut viam possint redire."

“O God who showest to them that are in error the light of thy truth, to the intent that they may return into the way of righteousness ; grant unto all those who are admitted into the fellowship of Christ’s religion, that they may avoid those things that are contrary to their profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same ; through our Lord Jesus Christ.” All the change this admirable petition has received in passing through fourteen centuries, is the prefix of the attribute Almighty to the word God, and the addition of the words “of righteousness” to the phrase “that they may return unto the way,” and this addition dates back more than thirteen hundred years. Thus are our Collect Prayers as we use them day by day throughout the world the product and bequest of the Church’s earlier days. From the same source is the collect for the fifth Sunday after Trinity, which we have already quoted as breathing a plaint over the death-struggle of the Empire of the West with the invading hordes from the North. It is the Church’s prayer for peace echoing to us, through the noise and tumult of countless strifes and ceaseless struggles, the quiet assurance of faith, the blessed confidence of a certain hope. And what can be more truly spiritual, more truly reflecting the mind and words of Christ than the Collects for the ninth Sunday after Trinity, telling of our inability to “do anything that is good without” God ;—the thirteenth, ascribing all our “true and laudable service” to the “only gift” of God, both having reference to the Pelagian controversy in their assertions of the imbecility

of the human will, and the fourteenth, asking so touchingly the "increase of faith, hope and charity, all of which are Leonine in their origin. While the Collects for the tenth and twelfth Sundays, among the most beautiful of our prayers where all are beautiful, are also derived, with trifling verbal changes, from the same ancient source. How trifling these changes are, and how nearly our prayers to-day reproduce these early forms will appear from the originals of the Collects for the ninth, thirteenth and fourteenth Sundays after Trinity, which we give in their order from the Leonine Sacramentary. "Largire nobis, Domine, quæsumus, spiritum cogitandi quæ bona sunt promptius et agendi, ut qui sine Te esse non possumus, secundum Te vivere valeamus. Per," etc.* "Omnipotens et misericors Deus, de Cujus munere venit, ut Tibi a fidelibus Tuis dignè et laudabiliter serviatur, tribue ut ad promissiones Tuas sine offensione curramus. Per," etc.† "Omnipotens sempiterne Deus, da nobis fidei, spei et charitatis augmentum, et ut mereamur assequi quod promittis, fac nos amare quod præcipis. Per," etc.‡ The original sources of our Collects for the tenth and twelfth Sundays after Trinity, also Leonine, are as follows :—"Ad aures misericordiæ Tuæ, Domine, supplicum vota perveniant, et ut possimus impetrare quæ poscimus, fac nos semper Tibi placita postulare. Per," etc.§ "Virtutum cœlestium, Deus, Qui plura præstas quam petimus aut meremur, tribue, quæsumus, ut

* S. Leonis Opera Omnia. ii. 122.

† Ibid, ii. 79.

‡ Ibid, ii. 78, 79.

§ Ibid, ii. 86.

Tuâ nobis misericordiâ conferatur, quod nostrorum non habet fiducia meritorum. Per," etc.* Next in order to the Leonine Sacramentary is that ascribed to Gelasius, Bishop of Rome from A. D. 492 to 496. The ecclesiastical historians tell us much of this worthy's zeal as a theological disputant, and of his energy as a ruler of the Church ; but it was reserved for comparatively modern times to exhibit his claim to rank among our earliest devotional compilers and authors. This honor is deservedly his, in consequence of his digest of the Collects existing in his own day, and his addition to their number and value from his own compositions. From his Sacramentary, first published in 1680 by Thomasius, from a manuscript belonging to the Queen of Sweden, we derive either directly or with more or less variation or development of form, nearly thirty of our collects and prayers. We can do little more than to indicate the titles of these prayers, dwelling only on those having especial claims on our passing notice. The morning and evening Collects for peace in the daily prayers are from the Gelasian Sacramentary. They are in their original form as follows :—"Deus auctor pacis et amator, Quem nosse vivere, Cui servire regnare est, protege ab omnibus impugnationibus supplices Tuos ; ut qui defensione Tuâ fidimus, nullius hostilitatis arma timeamus. Per," etc.† "Deus a Quo sancta desideria et recta sunt consilia et justa sunt opera ; da servis Tuis illam quam mundus dare non potest pacem ; ut et corda mandatis Tuis

* S. Leonis Opera Omnia, ii. 111. † Bright's Ancient Collects, p. 211.

dedita, et hostium sublatâ formidine tempora sint Tuâ protectione tranquilla. Per," etc.*—O God the author and lover of peace, whom to know is to live, whom to serve is to reign, protect us, thy suppliants, from all assaults, that we who trust in Thy defence may not fear the arms of the enemy, through Jesus Christ.—O God, from whom are all holy desires, and right counsels, and just works, give to us, Thy servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be devoted to Thy commands, and that the fear of our enemies being taken away, there may, with Thy protection, be tranquil times through Jesus Christ our Lord.

This evening collect for peace, found also in the Sacramentary of Gregory, to which we shall soon refer, and appended to the Sarum Litany, in use in England long before the Reformation, is given in the Elizabethan Primer of 1559, with even a more literal rendering than we have it now. Viewed in its historic relations, as having been the expression of the Church's daily cry for peace in the midst of so many trials and troubles for nearly fourteen centuries, its associations with the past are numberless. No one, whose is the least thought or care for the Church's history, can fail to feel their force as he thus adds the incense of his devotion to the prayers of all saints who have gone be-

* Bright's Ancient Collects, p. 212. In the Gregorian Sacramentary the opening words of this prayer are as follows:—"Deus a Quo sancta desideria, recta consilia et justa sunt opera;" and "nostra" is added to "corda" towards the close. *Vide* S. Gregorii Magni om. op. iv., 238.

fore. It teaches us with the weight of centuries—all speaking to us in its brief summary of devotion—that “only in doing God’s work can we enjoy His peace; that the gift which the world can neither give nor take away, is for those who know Him as the fountain of good counsels and just works.”

From the same source we have our evening Collect for Aid against Perils. It is one of the sweetest prayers of the Church’s service, as we find it in a Vesper Office composed by Gelasius, or as it is faithfully rendered in the English Prayer-Book. It is a sad evidence either of a want of taste or excuseless oversight that this prayer, shorn of its opening clause so expressive and beautiful, “Lighten our darkness, O Lord,” in the “Proposed Book,” was not restored to its original form when the Convention of 1789—the first *General* Convention of the Church in the United States—wisely went back to the old Prayer-Book of the mother Church. This Collect is, however, older than Gelasius. It may be traced to a prayer-like hymn of the Eastern Compline, which supplicates light from the Source of light, and deliverance from the great Deliverer.

The Collect for the Clergy and People as we use it in our evening prayers, is from this Sacramentary. In this prayer the expression in the English version, “who alone workest great marvels,” closely following the original, “Qui facis mirabilia magna solus,” is changed in our American service into “From Whom cometh every good and perfect gift.” Besides these, the Collects for the fourth Sunday in Advent, for Innocent’s

Day, for the Sunday before Easter, the second Collect for Good Friday, the first half of that for Easter day, for the fourth and fifth Sundays after Easter, for the first, second, sixth, seventh, eighth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth, fifteenth, sixteenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first Sundays after Trinity, the prayer, "Assist us mercifully in these our supplications and prayers," originally and most appropriately a supplication for travellers, the Confirmation prayer for the seven-fold gifts of the Spirit, doubtless, as Mr. Palmer, in his "*Origines Liturgicæ*," remarks, "much more ancient" than the time of Gelasius; the prayer in the Visitation Office, beginning, "O most merciful God;" and the first of the Commination prayers, "O Lord, we beseech Thee," found in our American Book among the Ash Wednesday prayers, are all derived to us "*originally*" from this venerable service-book; to which," proceeds Mr. Bright, in his admirable Appendix to his "*Ancient Collects*," "may also be traced the substance of some portions of the long Collect before the imposition of hands in the Consecration of Bishops, not to speak of a few words which, as belonging to the Canon of the Mass, are much older than the Sacramentary which contains them. These words are, 'may be fulfilled'" ('filled,' simply, in our American book, a change for the better) "'with Thy grace and heavenly benediction,'—'not weighing our merits, but pardoning our offences,'—'by Whom and with Whom,' &c.,—'Omni benedictione cœlesti et gratiâ repleamur;'—'non æstimator meriti, sed veniæ, quæsumus, largitor.'—'Per

Ipsum et cum Ipso . . . *'est Tibi Deo Patri Omnipotenti in unitate Sp. Sancti omnis honor et gloria,'*” etc. Well may we accord to this monument of antiquity a most important share in bringing down to us and making instinct with devotion the very words of the prayers of the saints used in the Church’s earliest days by martyrs and confessors of the faith.

Towards the close of the sixth century, Gregory the Great compiled his famous Sacramentary, condensing and changing the Gelasian compositions, and adding somewhat from his own pen. His work, so deeply revered as to be often bound by its possessors in gold and silver and ivory, was widely adopted in the West, and, with all its evidences of a faith interpolated and defiled, is still found in its “Collects of matchless profundity” to comprehend almost “all the spiritual needs of man.” In this work, borne by Austin to English shores with the message of salvation, when for the second time Christianity was brought to the British Isles, we find the original sources of the Collects for the Festivals of St. Stephen, and St. John the Evangelist ; for the Epiphany and the five Sundays following ; for Septuagesima, Sexagesima ; the second, third, fourth, and fifth Sundays in Lent ; the first for Good Friday, the second half of that for Easter, for Ascension and Whitsunday ; for the third, fourth, seventeenth, twenty-second, twenty-third, twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth Sundays after Trinity ; for the Purification, the Annunciation, St. Michael and all Angels ; the first part of “We humbly beseech Thee, O Father ;” the

collect, "Direct us, O Lord," or, as it is in the English Prayer-Book, "Prevent us, O Lord;" the second prayer in the Baptismal Office, "Almighty and immortal God;" and the opening portion of the first prayer in the Burial Service. To these we may add, with less certainty, the morning collect for grace, which is an amplification of a Gelasian form; the collect for Trinity Sunday, the original of which expresses a thought lost sight of in our translation, but which had a deep meaning in those days of conflict with Arianism—"ut ejusdem fidei firmitate ab omnibus semper muniamur adversis"—"that *by* stedfastness," as Mr. Bright observes, "in this faith, we are to be safe from evil; that our Creed is to be the shield of our life;" and that surpassing Collect for purity in the Communion Office, "O God, unto Whom all hearts are open, all desires known." The Collect for the Festival of the conversion of St. Paul is developed from one of these anonymous prayers of the same age, and the second part of that for St. Bartholomew's day from another.

It was this Sacramentary of Gregory, as we have mentioned, that Augustine, first Archbishop of Canterbury, bore with him among his choicest treasures on his mission to English shores. From this compilation, the repository of the words and phrases of an earlier devotion, these Collects—by far the larger portion of those we use throughout the Christian year—were, with greater or less changes, or more frequently with no change at all, incorporated into the ancient

missals of Salisbury, York, Hereford, and other dioceses, and as Mr. Palmer, in his "*Origines Liturgicæ*," informs us, also into the Sacramentaries of the English Church written before the Norman conquest. Years and centuries were these hallowed words the language of devotion in the English Church ere the Breviary* of the Romish Church was compiled. That dates no further back than the Council of Trent, while our English Prayer-Book as it is, with only verbal changes, was in use in England ere that Council met, and in its Latin originals had long, long before been naturalized on English soil. Well may these precious, priceless words be prized where day by day for more than twelve centuries they have ceaselessly gone up to God from Christian lips and Christian hearts, and by us as well who claim a common interest with the present sons of the soil in their English ancestry and all its ancient glory.

Blending so exquisitely strength and sweetness—assailing "Heaven's door," as Keble has it, "with the forceful knocking" of determined supplication—they are "comfortable words" to the penitent and the prayerful one. As Hooker, quoting from St. Augustine, tells us of the Egyptian brethren, that they "have many prayers, but every one of them very short," "lest that vigilant and erect attention of mind, which

* The Breviary was compiled in consequence of a decree of the Council of Trent, and was sanctioned by a bull of Pope Pius V., issued in July, 1566. The use of the Prayer-Book in English was enjoined by act of Parliament on and after Whitsuntide, 1549.

in prayer is very necessary, should be wasted or dulled through continuance," so is the brevity of our Collects a secret of their power. Adapting themselves, as a modern English scholar has it, "with marvellous flexibility to all the different conditions of the human spirit," they may become the models or the materials of all our private and social prayer as well as the vehicle of our public supplications. And this is not alone because they are the heritage of the past—the prayers of the saints all along the Christian centuries—but because they are older still than Sacramentaries or Liturgies: they are Bible words made instinct with devotion. They are Bible thoughts and facts given to us on our knees, in the guise of "fit and acceptable words." And, as blended in rich mosaic in our Common Prayer, or called forth one after another from the treasure-coffers of our memory, when we draw nigh to God, in our closets or round our hearthstones, their use, so closely do they bind us to the past, is as the outpouring of the vial of odors which are the prayers of the saints before the Throne of God. Aptly has Bishop Sanderson summed up their excellency, as he has styled these Collects, "the most passionate, proper, and most elegant comprehensive expressions that any language ever afforded."

Expressing so much, while they meet the inspired requirement, "Let thy words be few"—addressing the Most High with such reverent adoration, and uttering man's needs with the intensity of deepest feeling—bringing ever before us our childhood and God's Father-

hood, and never forgetting the all-prevailing Name through which alone they are made fervent and effectual—they charm the ear with their rhythmical harmony while they lift the soul into union and communion with its God. In their tracings of the Saviour's footsteps wherever He hath been and whithersoever He will go, these prayers tell us of their divine origin. They sprang up from precious seed sown by the wayside as the Lord passed by ; or, in their commemoration of Apostles and confessors of the elder day, grew up with the flowers that bloomed over martyrs' graves. And as we are privileged year by year to use these words, may ours be ever more and more the mind of the Lord Jesus, and may we follow the sainted dead they recall to mind, so far as they have followed Christ. Thus—as “words without thoughts to Heaven never go”—shall the angel at the altar having the golden censer add the incense of our devotion to the prayers of all saints before the Throne. Our supplications, offered thus in the Church's words, with faith and trust, shall need nothing besides, save that with Christ's help we ever strive

“To live more nearly as we pray.”

Sermons on the Liturgy.

SERMON IV.

THE CREED.

MORGAN DIX, D.D.

2 TIMOTHY, i. 13.—“Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me.”

In response to an invitation, I am here this evening as one of the lecturers in the present course ; and the subject assigned to me was “The Creeds.” Let me begin by a correction : it should have been “The Creed.” For, although we use more than one form—now reciting what is called the Apostles’ Creed, and again repeating the Nicene—yet, substantially, these are the same. Our belief, as Christians, is expressed with some reticence in the shorter of those symbols ; it is magnificently developed in the longer. But whether we use the one or the other, there is only one Faith ; and so the Creed of the Catholic Church must be one. This, then—THE CREED—is to form the subject of my remarks. I shall endeavor, by God’s help, to show its value and necessity as an agent in promoting and securing unity of thought and belief among religious men.

The signs of the times in which we live are as the signs of the latter days. A prominent feature of the age is the diversity of opinions as to the sense of Holy Scripture. We all use the same Bible ; and yet the disputes about its meaning are interminable. Thus, to give illustrations : one man reads, and adores the Holy Trinity ; while another reads, and derides the idea of plurality of persons in the Divine Nature. One reads, and worships the Lord Jesus Christ as God ; while another, reading, finds that He was but an inspired man. One reads, and takes his infant to be baptized ; another reads, and concludes that infant baptism is an absurdity. One reader becomes convinced that multitudes of the human race shall be eternally lost ; another is as sure that every one shall at length be recovered and saved. One finds Episcopacy to be of apostolic institution ; a second remains a satisfied Presbyterian ; while a third revels in Congregationalism as the true primitive form of Church government. Such are some specimens of the wide, the radical, the immense variations in opinion among men who agree only in this, that the Bible is inspired and contains the truth.

From this diversity, as from a primal cause, a very remarkable result has come. It is, that men have reached, practically, the conclusion that the Holy Scriptures do not contain any one meaning which a man must believe to his soul's health and salvation. Whatever they may say of the value and sacredness of the Bible, in practice they have made a distinction be-

tween the Book and the meaning of the Book, deeming it enough that a man accept the Book, and thereupon allowing him to give to it what meaning he likes. They reason, and talk, and act, as though there were no such thing as one, uniform sense in the Scriptures, but that they mean one thing to this man, and another to that, and anything to any one, according as it may seem good and right in his own eyes. Because they say, that if a man hold the Bible to be the Word of God, and read it conscientiously as such, he may rest secure in any conclusions at which he shall have arrived, as to the matters therein contained and expressed.

But this result involves the destruction of the Christian faith. It is, in fact, nothing less than deism in disguise. For the deist denies that Almighty God has made any revelation to man except such as He makes to each individual in his own mind and his own spirit. It is precisely on that shoal that they must drive who hold the views already considered. Deism denies any outward revelation binding on intellect and soul and life. But if you say that each reader of the Holy Scriptures may interpret them as he likes, you practically deny to them a power outside of the mind, which shall control the mind. And, therefore, the principles which we have been considering lead directly to deism, and constitute, in fact, the chief cause of the growth and spread of infidelity among the readers and thinkers of our own time.

Thus, to state again the opening of our case, a marked characteristic of this day is the endless diver-

sity of opinions about the meaning of the Scripture. The effect of this state of things upon the public mind is to lead men to the conclusion that the Bible means anything or everything, according as a man may understand it. And this conclusion lands us at once in deism, and destroys the idea of an outward and authoritative revelation from Almighty God.*

Such is the fatal point which tens of thousands among us have reached, and that is the straight path by which they have come. Let us proceed to inquire into the cause of this deplorable result.

That cause is to be found far back. It lies in a defective method of using the Bible. Outside of the Church it is, or has been in past years, very commonly held that Almighty God intended every man to be his own Bible-interpreter. So that the *rationale* of the true use of the Holy Scriptures would seem to be as follows : that a copy of the Bible should be placed in the hands of every intelligent person, without note or

* " Admettre une révélation divine, une parole divine, dont le sens n'est pas fixé par une tradition authentique et publique ; soutenir que Dieu a livré sa parole à l'interprétation individuelle, qui trouve dans la Bible les sens les plus contradictoires, n'est-ce pas diviser les hommes au lieu de les unir ? n'est-ce pas détruire la société religieuse, et aller directement contre le but que Dieu se propose en donnant au monde la religion ? Le simple bon-sens aperçoit sur-le-champ les inconvénients d'un système de révélation qui décèlerait dans son auteur une sagesse inférieure à la sagesse vulgaire des hommes. Il y a dans ce système une si grave inconséquence, qu'il ne peut être un poste tenable pour l'esprit humain. La raison niera bien vite une révélation aussi mal conçue, et aboutera au pur déisme. . . . Les faits ici parlent assez haut pour nous dispenser des preuves."—*Abbé Maret*.

comment ; and that each one, so provided, should read and study for himself ; and that, when he should have satisfied himself, by such independent investigation, of the things that he ought to believe, and of the works that he ought to perform, he would have done just what God meant him to do, and have used the Word of God just as God meant it to be used, and need have then no farther care, but to live and die according to his sincere convictions, arrived at in the manner described. I believe that this is the popular notion of the true way to read the Bible. This idea is at the bottom of all that is said about unbiassed judgment, and unfettered thought, and unprejudiced conclusions. This is the principle of pure independency and individualism ; and the development is logical, necessary and sure by which the mind moves from this principle to skepticism, to deism, to atheism, and to death.

Wherefore, brethren, we reject that principle ; we reject and denounce it wherever it appears. We deny the individual right to interpret Holy Scripture in the manner described ; we deny that any one may safely rest in his own private opinion and judgment as to the meaning of the Word of God. Men were not made to live alone ; nor were they made to think and believe alone. The principle of independency and individualism in Scriptural interpretation is false, because it leads to the miserable results which we deplore, and because it cannot, in the nature of things, lead to any other.

Rejecting the popular method, therefore, we proceed

to suggest and establish another method in its place. It may be called the method of submission to authority. Let me proceed to develope that better way, and thus to show the place held in the Christian system by the Creed.

Almighty God gave the Holy Scriptures to men, a revelation of Himself and of His will toward them, and a repository in which are contained all things necessary to be believed unto salvation. But now reflect. The Bible is nothing, apart from the meaning of the Bible. The words are but the vehicles of ideas ; and, except they convey the precise ideas to the mind, they are feebler than an echo and more empty than the wind. These propositions are so simple that it would seem to border on the ludicrous to assert them so gravely, if the fact were not that they are, as we have seen, substantially denied, not to say flouted, by the self-will of the age. Therefore we assert and press them. We say that the Holy Bible has but one meaning and one sense ; that it cannot teach two opposite things at once ; and that, unless we grasp its real meaning and its real sense, it has lost for us, in a greater or less degree, its value. It cannot contain, at once, the creed of the Trinitarian and that of the Unitarian. It cannot teach, at once, that Jesus is Very God, and that He was made like other creatures. It cannot teach, at once, the duty of baptizing infants, and the sole efficacy of believer's baptism. It cannot teach, at once, that sacraments are means of grace, and bare forms ; that Christ was an atoning sacrifice

for sin, and a mere moral exemplar ; that Episcopacy is of Apostolic authority, that Presbyterianism is of Divine institution, and that Congregationalism is the true type of Church polity. In a word, on every point that can be named, the Holy Scriptures teach one thing, and only one. If a man holds what they really teach, just as they teach it, he has the truth. If he holds anything else but that, he has not the truth. It matters not in the least what his opinion may be. It is not a question of opinion, but a question of fact. The Scriptures contain one, uniform, consistent body of revealed truth. If a man has not got that into his mind and heart, he is just where he would be without them. In whatever degree he is thus deficient, in that same degree is he in darkness. Whatever else he may have got hold of, he is not in possession of the revelation of God.

But now, if these principles be admitted—and how, in the name of common sense, can they be denied?—it follows that there must be some way, simple, plain, and ready for us all, by which we may come at the right sense of the Holy Scriptures. For, if God has made a revelation to us, it can only have been because we needed it to our salvation. The knowledge of the things so revealed must be indispensable to our temporal and eternal welfare. We believe that the Bible contains such a revelation. But the Bible is of no use to us whatever, excepting as conveying to our minds, distinctly and precisely, the articles revealed. We must be able to discern them, or else we stand as though

they had not been made known. What we want to get at is that one truth which the Bible contains, and which, substantially, the Bible is. For this we cannot depend on private judgment. To say that any sense that a man may hit upon as he reads will do for him, and is for him, practically, the Word of God, is surely a destructive speech. It overthrows the whole idea of a Revelation ; it lands the victim of the delusion in deism ; it makes of the Scriptures a mere fallible and variable bundle of contradictions. The position is fallacious and ruinous. We must have a guide ; we must have an authority. A guide to lead us ; an authority to constrain us. A guide to say, "Come with me, and I will teach you the truth." An authority to say, "Submit your judgment to my decisions, and in all doubtful matters believe, not as you think best, but as I direct you."

Now, my beloved brethren, we have such a guide and such an authority in the Church of Christ. "Very excellent things are spoken of thee, thou City of God." He who gave the Holy Scriptures gave also their interpreter. He constituted His visible Church to be the pillar and ground of the truth, the witness and keeper thereof. A pillar to uphold it ; a ground on which it should stand firm. A witness to its meaning ; and a keeper of the letter and the sense alike. "The Church hath authority in controversies of faith." Her decisions must therefore be final and conclusive in all such controversies ; and the only proper attitude of the mind toward her is that of respect, of deference, of submission.

If a difficulty be felt in receiving this idea, it must be greatly lessened, and it ought to vanish, when one considers that, while the Holy Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation, they do not present those things in a logical, a connected, a systematic way. The articles of the Christian faith are not to be read in any one place, all together. It is a glittering, a shining, a splendid confusion. Technical precision we do not find ; orderly arrangement we miss. Who can piously doubt that, in God's revelations to us, there is as perfect a system as that whereby the worlds were framed and the universe is governed ? And yet, in His written word, there is discernible no system at all.* It is as though the good Lord had opened His hands and shaken down showers of jewels broadcast about our path and about our way, and that they were lying just as they fell, for us to collect, to set, to keep. Re-

* NOTE.—The more we think of the matter, the more certain becomes the conclusion that the men to whom the Books of the New Testament were addressed must have been already in possession of the truth in a systematic form. For the whole cast and tenor of the writings presupposes a maturity of knowledge in those who were to read them. It is unquestionably true, and no arts can conceal the fact, that the Gospels were written for believers, and not for infidels ; that the Epistles were sent to Christian men, and not to heathens. Instructed disciples were they to whose hands those volumes were to come ; and their faith must have been taught them before the Scriptures came to their possession. That is the logical way : first the Creed ; afterwards the Bible. And so the baptized child is taught the Creed by the Church before it knows its letters, and the Bible is given to confirm us in the faith, and not to be the subject-matter of experiment and investigation.

alize this ; and then reflect how inadequate your powers would be to the double task, first, of gathering all the precious pearls together, and, secondly, of harmonizing them aright, in due proportion and arrangement, as God intended that they should be viewed and arranged, and you will find it easier to accept the traditional belief of Christendom that it was never the design to put that tremendous work on individual minds ; that such minds are incompetent to the task ; and that the promise of light and aid and guidance in that task and work was made solely to the Catholic Church—to that organization of which it was declared, “The gates of hell shall not prevail against her.”

We have argued that there must be a guide and an authority in Scriptural interpretation. We find, in point of fact, that there is such a guide, and that such an authority does exist. To proceed : This interpreter must have a voice ; and we believe that the voice is uttered in the Creed.

The Church has authority in controversies of faith ; and, therefore, she has the right to publish a Creed. She exercises that right, as a matter of course, because the authority was given to her for the good of the souls of men. She sets forth, by that authority and in the exercise of that right, her Creed. It is very short, in order that it may be learned without difficulty by every member of her fold, as well by the children as by the full-grown. It is very precise and clear ; for, if it were not so, her object in imposing it would be defeated. It is a short form of sound words which can-

not be misunderstood. It expresses the one and only meaning of the Holy Scriptures in respect to things necessary to be known and believed unto salvation. Its possession is an inestimable privilege. If we take it as our key, our guide, our index, we cannot err in reading the Word of God. For it is the Bible compressed and condensed. It is a *resumé* of all the doctrinal portions of the Holy Scriptures. It states certain things concerning the nature, the existence and the personality of Almighty God ; the situation and needs of the sinner ; the mode of his redemption ; the person and work of the Redeemer ; the means by which salvation is to be secured ; the privileges of man in this world under the Gospel, and his prospects in the world to come. On all these points, and on each in its turn, there is but one truth in the Bible, and that one truth is stated in the Creed. It is in perfect harmony with the Scriptures. It expresses the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. And thus we come, by its aid, rapidly and surely to the fulness of understanding and knowledge. We do not deny the possibility that a man, without the help of the Creed, might gather for himself the true meaning of the Bible. But it is a mere possibility, and no more. It were not probable ; you cannot produce, perhaps, a solitary case in which it has occurred. It could only be done by long, laborious and painful process ; it would not be accomplished till after many years, till near the close of life. But, with the Creed, a child knows the sense of the Word of God. He knows it

right early ; he has not to wait ; he has not to travel in the dark for the better part of his life ; he sees his way clearly as soon as he can walk. To the individual the possession of the Creed is a vast advantage ; to the Church it is indispensable, that she may teach intelligibly the one truth ; to men in the mass it is a necessary means to agreement in belief, to unity of thought. With the Creed, you secure consent, and strong and living faith ; without it, you leave men to individualism, to dissension, to dull and nerveless skepticism.*

* " While they (the Creeds) are advantageous to the individual believer, to the Church, as a whole, they are absolutely indispensable. If the Church is to be one body, it must have one faith, and that faith must be propounded in a clear, distinct, and unequivocal form, as a test to show who are and who are not of her fellowship. It will never be enough to say that all who receive the Bible shall be received by the Church ; because, although it may be very true that he who receives the Bible receives the truth, still it does not by any means follow that he will extract the truth from it. Every heresy that exists affects to be grounded on the Bible ; but if for that reason a man were to attempt to comprehend them all in one Church, he would act as unwisely as he who should endeavor to combine two or more substances naturally and necessarily destructive one of another, merely because they might eventually be reducible to the same elements. For these reasons it is, among many others, that the members of our Church should be exhorted from time to time to 'hold fast the form of sound words' which by God's providence they possess ; to hold fast not only the sound words themselves, as recorded in the Sacred Volume, but that particular form of them also which is embodied in their Creeds. From time to time they must be admonished 'to contend earnestly for the faith,' that it may be maintained as it was once delivered to the saints, without suppression and without addition. There is need of these exhortations, I say, because there are always powerful principles at work to deter men from the sacred conflict. There is that self-indulgent indolence which indis-

But here it is my duty to notice an objection which, if it could be maintained, were fatal to our argument. In examining it the subject will be continued and suitably concluded.

It is urged that the Creed-principle is but the principle of individualism slightly magnified. A Creed must be composed by some persons ; and they who accept it are but assenting to the dictum of composers. The Bible is divine ; to receive it is to submit to the word of God. A Creed is human ; and to adopt it is to yield our judgment and reason to the word of man. To this objection, if not made in a captious spirit, we are ready to reply ; nay, forward to do so, because it is the only one which deserves attention.

The objection holds against any and every Creed, except that of the Catholic Church. It is good against any formulary that a branch of the Church, or a sect in the Church, might frame. The power to make and impose a Creed, belongs to no section, but to the whole body. Articles of Religion, Confessions of Faith, Formularies of Comprehension, have been drawn up and subscribed to, and set forth, by separate branches of Christ's flock. All these compositions, however useful for their purposes, and in their limited way, have more or less of that individualism, the least taint

poses them for the exertion required. There is that pliant easiness of disposition which would rather make any sacrifice than risk the interruption of peace, as it is termed. And, above all, there is that shallow but too prevalent vanity, to which the praise of liberality and enlightenment forms always an irresistible bribe."

Archdeacon Coxe, Plain Thoughts on Important Church Subjects.

whereof would vitiate a Creed. They may be bad, they may be good, they may be indifferent ; but all are local, and without constraining power over men in the mass. We have our Thirty-nine Articles, and the Roman Communion has her Tridentine Creed and Decrees, and the Lutherans and Presbyterians their Augsburg and Westminster Confessions ; but these are private property, and no man's salvation turns on accepting them. The objection which we are considering is good against any and every Creed, or Confession, or Formula, which may be adopted, or composed, or agreed upon by any sect, or party, or minority in the Church. But it holds not against the Creed of the Catholic world, and that for the reasons which follow.

There is no trace of individualism or sectarianism in the origin of that Creed. It was not a novel introduction ; it was not the production of a party. You could hardly say that it was composed ; rather might you apply to it the sublime description of things divine, and say that from the beginning *IT WAS*.

For the Creed, as set forth in the year 325, by the Church of God in Council General assembled, was published as a true statement of that which had been always the faith of Christian men. The holy fathers who sat in that Council were witnesses, and nothing more. They were called on to give evidence, as a man gives evidence under oath and in a court of law. We assert—appealing to the authentic records of those times, and challenging our adversaries to produce historic testimony to the contrary—that the work of the First

General Council was a conservative work, and not a creative one. The cavil of infidelity is this, that the Nicene Fathers drew up and published a new Creed, expressing party views, and intended to serve as a party platform. Were this true, we should reject the whole proceeding with just abhorrence. We should regard it with the same indignation with which we should view, in any age or under any circumstances, the attempt to foist upon mankind a novelty as an article of faith. But the cavil of infidelity is a cavil, and no more. The Fathers did not so. They were but witnesses. Of each in order the question was asked: "What has been, from the first, the faith of Christians in that part of the Church which you represent?" Their answers to that question stand on record forever. Those answers live in the Creed; they constitute the Creed. Wherefore that Creed was no new thing in substance. It was a summary of the one and ancient and universal belief of Christian men. A summary singularly clear, magnificent, and, as I honestly believe, inspired and divine.

I dwell on this point a moment. The Creed of which we speak was drawn up by a General Council. No considerable schism had, up to that time, occurred. It was possible for the voice of the united Church to be heard. All parts of her domain were fairly represented in that Council. Its delegates spoke for the whole body. Their decrees were referred back to their constituencies; they were reviewed, they were ratified. Thus the testimony was made as nearly univer-

sal as it is possible that it could have been. The consent was as nearly unanimous as it could have been in this fallen and sinful world. All sectarian elements vanished ; all that was partisan or one-sided was cast out with the heretics. The Creed remained, before the eyes of the nations, clear, magnificent, satisfying, divine.

For the basis of this argument, viz. : that the Fathers at Nicæa were not inventors but witnesses, and that they gave to the world, and to all time, and to us, no new confession of faith, but the old one in a more intelligible form, I make solemn appeal, before God and His Angels, to the authentic historic records of the time. But if this appeal be sustained, by the evidence properly admissible in the case, then the idea of aught sectarian or individual in the Creed must vanish forever. It stands out, as a true expression of the faith of the Catholic Church, not of the belief of some part or portion thereof, but as the symbol of the faith of the Holy Church throughout all the world. But she, in her corporate character, is God's appointed institution for preserving the Holy Scriptures and defining their sense. She inherits the promise of His everlasting presence with her, and of her own indefectibility. It is impossible to reconcile this her mission, and that His promise, with the hypothesis that her universal voice, at any instant of history, could speak a lie. And, therefore, we hold of the Creed, which her own voice did speak, that it is beyond a doubt the symbol of God's own truth, and that he who holds it cannot

intellectually be wrong as to the matters therein contained.*

Thus the Creed realizes to us the guidance which we require. Its publication is the death-blow to vagueness in religious thought; its possession is to every faithful heart the blessed assurance that it hath, beyond all doubt, the mind of the Spirit and the counsel of God.

Brethren, I commenced with the revolting picture of the existing variations among those who receive the Bible as the Word of God. On what basis shall we stand, can we stand, while striving to cure that disease? I know not what may be said by others, but this I know, that as for any other remedy that I ever heard, it all came at last to the same thing, it left the door open to all the old evils. The case was like that of the house swept and garnished, after the one devil, which house was presently entered, with much complacency, by seven fresh devils in company with the old one. Some say that men ought to pray, and then to read, and that the light will come. That is well for one who believes already, or who reads for devotional exercise; but as a mode of settling controversies about

* The difficulties of the objector to our position are immense. I would ask him:—1st, Is it conceivable that the Fathers of Nicæa could have been ignorant of what had from the first been believed among them? 2d, Is it possible that they could have misrepresented facts, and deliberately asserted what they knew to be false? 3d, Is it possible that the Holy Church throughout the world could in the year of grace 325 have utterly lost the faith, and taken in its place a Creed, which, if not true, is black blasphemy?

the faith, it is useless, because it is not the way that God meant us to take. And therefore I have known two men who, so praying, came to directly opposite conclusions. Let us leave those wild ideas of inner lights to the Transcendentalists and the Illuminati. We know of no way of bringing men to one mind on doctrinal questions save by the Creed ; without its help they will read and study in vain, and diverge more and more.

Nor should there be any real difficulty in bringing men to one mind on this point. The Creed principle involves no contradiction of our common experience of human needs. It is admitted, it is acted on, by every religious denomination. There is not a sect in our neighborhood but has its particular Articles, or Confession, or Tests ; there is not a sect which could hold together a year without something of the kind. Wherever such formulas have been agreed to, a measurable unity of opinion is secured, and wherever among the denominations there can be found aught like agreement in religious thought, it may be traced to the existence and admitted obligation of some traditional definitions. But the principle thus admitted on a small scale needs but to be accepted in a larger way to secure a movement toward Christian unity. If carried out in good faith it would bring with it the restoration of that unity in thought and belief as its inevitable and glorious result. And why should not all men everywhere receive the Creed of the Universal Church ? There is no promise of permanence to any one branch ;

to the Church, as a whole, was the promise made. She alone can teach with authority. No separate section can make a Creed. Whether it be an Augsburg Confession, or a Book of Thirty-nine Articles, or a Catechism of Trent, or an Assembly's Catechism; such formularies are the production of minorities, and their existence is insecure and precarious. They may have their value, they may serve a turn, and yet they can rightfully assert no more than a minor importance, as compared with the august symbol of all places, all nations, and all times. Such compositions, if modestly restrained to their proper use, may retain a hold on respect; but if, at any moment, they should be stretched beyond their line, and invested with the dignity which belongs not to them, the rationalist may fairly take to them his exception. Of these local and temporary productions he may say with truth:—

“Our little systems have their day,
They have their day, and cease to be.”

He may fitly hold this speech of them, since all that is distinctively sectarian is little, and whatsoever is merely local must eventually fade away. But the words of the rationalist and the philosopher of this world avail not against THE CREED; they are cast up against it as the sputtering foam against the rock. That awful formulary expresses the faith, not of one age or of one time, not of one people, or of one race, or of one hemisphere, but it is the faith of the whole Church of God. It was composed, and published, and

accepted under circumstances which make the promises of Christ to mankind the guarantee of its absolute correctness. "It has its day ;" but the day is the day of the world until the Lord come back, until the last of earth. It has been received with reverence and love in every age since its promulgation ; and this day, out of 335,000,000 of Christians now on earth, 270,000,000 profess it as their assured belief. Here is the centre of unity for human thought, and here is the only centre ; around it the minds of the wise and devout must surely range themselves ere long. They may do so without shame and without reproach. For he who embraces the Catholic faith in accepting this symbol, joins no sect, nor changes from one to another, he simply gives his adhesion to the one historic body, whose are the promises, whose are the fathers, and whose glorified head is Christ over all, God blessed for evermore, Amen.

Sermons on the Liturgy.

SERMON V.

THE PSALTER AN INSPIRED LITURGY.

RT. REV. GEORGE BURGESS, D. D.

I CHRONICLES, CHAP. xvi., v. 7.: Then on that day David delivered first this Psalm to thank the Lord, into the hand of Asaph and his brethren.

ONE considerable portion of the Book of Common Prayer is placed above the reach of controversy. It needs no defender, for it has no opponent. Ecclesiastical authority, the usage of many ages, all sense of fitness, and all experience, would yield it support, if their aid were not superfluous: but to appeal even to them would here be irreverence to the Spirit of inspiration. The Psalter, as a part of the word of God, is the universal inheritance of believers.

When our Saviour had unfolded to His Apostles “the things which were written in the Psalms concerning Him:” when the Apostles had constantly cited that “which the Holy Ghost spake by the mouth of David,” the prophetic and mystical meaning of that book for the Church of Christ was settled forever. At once the sacred poetry of the Jewish worship passed over, without

a change, into the Christian assemblies. They caught up the charge of St. James, "Is any merry? let him sing psalms:" and all pious hearts delighted to maintain this perpetual melody. All down the tide of ages these are the sounds which, from either bank, as we float along, salute the morning sun, and echo into the stillness of the night. All over the East and West, throughout the ancient Church, alike in the House of God, in private abodes, and afterwards in monastic retreats, all acts of devotion began, or ended, or were interspersed, with psalmody: and no other hymns but those of the New Testament, and gradually the few which are founded on the Creed, such as the Gloria Patri, the Gloria in Excelsis, and the Te Deum, approached the universal dignity and acceptance of the sacred songs of Israel.

They crowd the Breviaries of the Papal Churches, enriching them with all the allusiveness of prophetic imagery. They are repeated in the more Oriental communions, with a frequency which must be oppressive to all earnestness of attention. They became, in popular metres, the carols of the Continental Reformation. The very prejudices of severer sects, casting away sometimes all monuments of Christian antiquity, of its literature and its art, paused and bent before the letter of the inspired word, and were content with insisting that it should be changed from prose which had the melody of verse, into verse which too often lacked even the dignity and smoothness of prose. Metrical Psalms were sung by those who discarded the Liturgy;

and the Covenanters would sing nothing else. It was only when and where all sacred music ceased, that this poetry of devotion, also given by the Spirit of God, was heard no more.

Apology, therefore, for the place of the Psalter in the worship of the Church, would simply throw some semblance of a shadow over the obvious glory of that worship. It is for us to attempt illustration, rather than defence, and to go round about Zion, rather that we may count her towers, than that we may assert her right to plant herself upon the sacred mountains. Where else should she stand? The principles on which the use of the Psalter, as a Christian Liturgy, must rest, need no vindication: but they ought still to be studied with reverence and affectionate interest; and, though deeply rooted, they are manifest on the surface.

At different periods in the history of the chosen Hebrew people, these divine compositions were committed to writing, and ever after each was recognized as the word of a prophet. Between the oldest and the latest extend the thousand years which passed between Moses and Ezra. Midway the great name of David covers by far the largest portion which can be assigned to any single author, and gives an usual title to the whole. They are actually a hundred and forty-seven. We have a hundred and fifty in the enumeration; but the hundred and eighth is composed from the fifty-seventh and sixtieth; the seventieth is the conclusion of the fortieth, and the fourteenth and fifty-third are identi-

cal. It is no improbable conjecture that these repetitions were so arranged with no other purpose but to make one of those round numbers, which the ancient nations loved, which are so easily rendered symbolical, and which fix themselves on the memory. These are almost the whole of the sacred, spiritual songs which have been preserved in the language of that selected nation ; they are absolutely all, except a few which are scattered through the more historical parts of the Old Testament. The same Holy Spirit who inspired the original thoughts and aspirations, assuredly presided also over the preservation and collection of all, so that we clasp this book to our bosoms without a doubt, as containing the very soul and breath of accepted piety in the days of the ancient covenant.

Of these Psalms, which are thus embodied into our worship, a certain number have nothing to mark them as belonging to any age or dispensation. They could as well have been said before the flood, and may be as well at the end of time as now, and as well here as in ancient Jerusalem. These extol the blessedness of piety, the sanctity and sweetness of the law of the Lord, the praises of the just, the glory of God in the creation of the heavens and earth, the omnipresence, wisdom, constancy and mercy of His government. They call on all creatures, unreasoning or intellectual, earthly or angelic, to join in honoring and welcoming the universal King. They counsel every one to eschew evil and do good ; to look beyond the present scene ; and keep that innocency which shall bring a man peace at

the last ; to dwell under the shadow of the Almighty, and fear no peril by night or by day, going out or coming in, from this time forth for evermore. They sing of the Lord as our Shepherd, of the green pastures and the still waters, and of comfort in the valley of the shadow of death. They beseech Him to make His way known upon earth, His saving health among all nations. They summon all those nations to worship before Him, and to come into His presence with thanksgiving. These Psalms, about one-fifth of the whole, demand neither alteration in word, nor adaptation in thought, to render them the tribute, meet and right, of all the servants of God in any assembly or in secret.

A certain number of the Psalms, on the other hand, are distinctly Jewish in their imagery, scenery and historical remembrances, but have no personal allusions. They recall and recite the wonderful works of the Lord for His people in Egypt and in the wilderness. They exult in the majesty and the stability of Jerusalem, the mother of saints, beloved of the Lord, beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth. They defy the assaults of her enemies, and triumph in the overthrow of the armies of the aliens. They utter the joy of those who greet the amiable tabernacles of the Lord of Hosts, and who pray for the peace of Jerusalem. They even describe the passage of the thunder and storm, "the voice of the Lord," over the land of Palestine, over the vast waters, over the cedars of Lebanon, and the wilderness of Kadesh. They celebrate the

services of the sanctuary, they are its very hymns of high praise, or they are the longing cries of men who sigh at a distance, when they remember in their exile how they went with the multitude into the house of God. Or they deplore the calamities of Jacob ; the vineyard which the beasts of the forest lay waste ; the carved work hurled down from the plundered shrine ; the blood of the saints shed round about the city ; the harps hung upon the willows of Babylon. They call on the Lord for His victorious aid in the day of peril ; they lift the voice of thanksgiving for national deliverance ; and they tell the hope or the accomplished joy of a return from captivity, which is like the rivers in the South, swollen by the rains in their season. More than one-fourth of the Psalms partake of this national or ecclesiastical character, and form emphatically the songs of the ancient Zion. But since that Zion was itself the seat of the divine covenant, and the representative capital of the chosen people, and since that covenant led on to a greater and better to come, and that people was to expand into a holy universal church, whatever was spoken thus of Salem and of Israel may now be repeated, both for its own sake, both as historical in the records of a past dispensation of mercy, and also as typical of that Mount Zion, that city of the living God, and that general assembly and church of the first-born, unto which we are come by the Gospel. To Christian hearts little explanation is needful. The greater fellowship, the more noble sanctuary, the more spiritual covenant, comprehends the

less, and we speak involuntarily the language of Canaan.

A certain number still of the Psalms, nearly a third, express some personal experience of him by whom the strain was sung. Most often it is David, at some passage in the eventful drama of his life ; the shepherd, the minstrel, the champion, the outlaw, the prince, the conqueror, the penitent sinner, the injured father, the venerable saint. There is scarcely a pain or a joy of the pious heart which had not found an utterance in the notes of his harpstrings. Prayer at all times ; trust in the midst of enemies ; abhorrence of the blasphemies which he was compelled to hear ; peace in secret meditation on God ; ardent love for His law ; inexpressible woe under the darkness of seeming desertion ; glimpses of light from heaven through the thick clouds ; triumphant gladness as the cloud rolled away ; thankful retrospection, glancing over all his days, and seeing God throughout them all ; immediate gratitude for signal rescue from the grave ; vindication of himself before God against false reproaches ; solemn reflection on the state of man as a pilgrim like his fathers ; profound, unutterable contrition, pouring itself out as if amidst floods of tears ; and praise which is to roll on from one generation to another, telling the mercy of God to David and to his seed forevermore ; these are the devout strains from the heart of the individual Psalmist. Every one of them must move an answering chord in millions of other hearts, as ages go by. There is no need that the events which were the occasion of the

sentiment should be exactly renewed, nor that the tide of feeling should flow at the same height; but many believers have passed through some one scene as memorable to them as were those to David, and his universal experience is constantly mirrored in ours. Something from every Psalm of this kind is thus known to every soul that is in the path of life, and various as are the emotions, each emotion may exist in any numerous assembly of Christians. At any time, some are oppressed or gladdened like the saints of old: and at one time or another, every one travels through some corner of the valley of weeping, and reaches some spot, higher or lower, on the holy hill of peace. All can have, therefore, some sympathy with every plaintive or joyous tone of the Psalmist, and the language of temporal peril, distress or deliverance, is easily transferred to the experience of our spiritual conflict or pilgrimage. What matters it when, or where, or from whom the accents of any sweet hymn first ascended the skies? Or, who can hesitate to take up the words of hostility, defiance and prayer, uttered by ancient heroes and martyrs of the faith, when they were encompassed by wicked men, and to apply them to the earthly enemies of the Church of God, or to the unseen principalities and powers against whom we wrestle? A soft and diluted piety has sometimes recoiled from the prophetic denunciations which are poured by the inspired writer upon those foes of his, whom certainly he would never have thus overwhelmed with the terrors of the Lord, had they not been also foes of the Lord. But all this

leads us up to one great principle, which must be somewhat unfolded before we proceed to still another and a more exalted class of these marvellous effusions from the Spirit of prophecy.

That principle is that there runs a thread of necessary analogy through the corresponding histories of the incarnate Son of God, of His collective church, and of each believer. He became a man that He might share all with those whom He vouchsafes to call His brethren. As a collective body, as his spiritual body, they are but the same individuals as when they stood apart: and each is one of His members. A common life, a common interest, common sentiments, must thus belong to Him and to them; to them as the Church and to them as individuals. They have the same friends and the same adversaries.

"In every pang that rends their heart,
The Man of sorrows had a part:"

feeling even, mystically and mysteriously, the burden of their sins, of which the guilt defiled Him not: and they can, by faith, identify themselves with His struggles and His righteousness. Such is the communion of believers with each other that each can at any time adopt as his own the joy or the grief of his brother, so far at least as to lend his sympathizing lips to its expression. All public worship must partake this necessity that individual feeling should sometimes be made by sympathy the common offering of all, as well as that the general feeling should flow into the channels

of all individual hearts. It is of the very nature of a liturgical worship that it shall unite the worshippers, not merely by phrases so vague as to cover all alike, but by causing at different seasons the special need of some to be the spontaneous sense of all. If in the whole Church of God there be or ever have been those whose woe or rapture, whose hope or dread, has broken forth in these words, then all the rest, by the force of their inward fellowship, may, even in a widely different frame, adopt the same words as their own form of prayer or of thanksgiving. "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it." There is no absolute limit of time or place. In the midst of our thronged cities and peaceful churches, we can repeat the complaint of the Hebrew exile in the wilderness. Far off upon the sea, five or six mariners can ring out to the winds the same jubilant psalm with which the white-robed choir of the cathedral, leading the response of thousands far down the vast nave, tell forth how amiable are the tabernacles of the Lord of Hosts, or cry, "we will go into His gates with thanksgiving." It is through this communion that a whole congregation, at whatever stage of life or of faith they may individually stand, can sing the swanlike song of that dying saint.

"E'en now to my expecting eyes

The heaven-built towers of Salem rise;"

or, as if bowing to the very dust, can cry with David and the publican,

"A broken heart, my God, my King,
Is all the sacrifice I bring!"

No Christian is wholly ignorant of either sentiment, and each of us, from the point at which he feels it, can, in holy sympathy, rise to the height of the one, or sink to the depth of the other.

Through the communion of the Church with its divine Head, it is able also to appropriate in its worship, as did the writers themselves, that remaining class of the Psalms, in which holy men "prophesied of the grace that should come, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." There is no Psalm that has not its fulfilment in the Lord Jesus, as He represents all human righteousness, devotion and love; as He is the Head of the Church, which is His body: and as in Him even the sorrows of sinful men, even for sin, are shared by the vicarious Sufferer. But in a class of Psalms, not exceeding one twelfth of the whole number, He stands forth, as the one, the original, the only Personage whose voice we hear, or whose praises we utter. He comes into the world, as no mere mortal comes: "Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me." He is reproached and reviled, and cries out as one forsaken: He tastes the cup of gall, and lots are cast for His vesture: they pierce His hands and His feet. But His soul is not left in Hades, nor does His flesh see corruption. He drinks of the brook by the way, then lifts

up His head ; enters the path of life ; is seated at the right hand of the Lord till all enemies are put under His feet ; and reigns from sea to sea, so long as the moon endureth, while all nations do Him service. There is but One, One awful, glorious Man, in whom all this humiliation and this triumph meet ; that One to whom the Lord has said, “Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee ; ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession.” Of Him His Church must ever sing ; and, existing as it does by His love and as His bride, it may ever repeat, in His name, the holy words which in that name were penned by His prophets.

On these principles, therefore, the Psalter is incorporated into all Christian worship ; the Psalms of general instruction, consolation, praise and prayer, as always, and always alike, appropriate ; the Psalms of national or ecclesiastical import, as fulfilled and applied in the similar but grander relations of the spiritual Israel, of the realm of Christ ; the Psalms of personal supplication, meditation or gratitude, as finding echoes, at one time or another, in all Christian experience, and made a common utterance through the bond of Christian communion ; and the Psalms of Messianic prophecy, as a lowly remembrance now of Him, our Head, of whom they were once the more obscure prediction.

The liturgical use of these sacred compositions in our Church deduces not only its origin, but much of

its very method, from the days and from the directions of David. He "delivered," says the First Book of Chronicles at the text, "this Psalm to thank the Lord, into the hand of Asaph and his brethren." The Psalm which then follows is one composed mainly by the union of a part of the hundred and fifth with the ninety-sixth, and closes with the first words of the hundred and thirty-sixth, and the last words of the hundred and sixth, in the Psalter. To certain races of the tribe of Levi was assigned the high duty of praising God continually in the sanctuary, with every instrument of solemn music known to that age and people, and with that best of all, the sweet, strong human voice. That certain Psalms were sung in the temple on certain days of the week, and certain others at certain festivals, is the tradition of the Jews ; and, in the absence of farther knowledge than has been preserved of the whole course of that ancient ritual, it is easy to believe that all of them were repeated, as with us, in some established order. That order with us is one which divides them into sixty portions, one portion for each morning and each evening of the month ; and it takes them as they stand, so that the exulting eighty-seventh is immediately succeeded by the desolation of the eighty-eighth ; and the triumphant chorus, "For His mercy endureth forever," twenty-seven times shouted forth, introduces then the exiles by the rivers of Babylon. In a world like this, where all joys and sorrows are so chastened and mingled, an order like this is suited to the human soul ; and they who would substitute some

other, under which, at one time, in a temple hung with palls, you should hear nothing but *misereres*, and in another, amidst floral bowers, nothing but jubilant songs, would only cause an uniformity which would be felt to be unnatural and oppressive. It is partly from this feeling that our Selections of Psalms, judicious as they were, have so seldom superseded, in any congregation, even for a day, the daily order of the Psalter. A responsive or antiphonal mode of singing would seem to be indicated by the language of Ezra, when he relates how, at the foundation of the second temple, the Levites stood "to praise the Lord, after the ordinance of David, King of Israel; and sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord, because He is good, for his mercy endureth forever toward Israel; and all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord." An alternate response is the most natural mode of giving life, ease and alacrity to such a service; and thus it has been adopted by the Christian Church with a wide consent. The Psalms are sung or said, in prose or in metre, as may be determined by necessity, or consecrated taste, or the high and overbalancing demand of common devotion. A rich and cultivated music is well; the cordial song of a multitude of voices is better; but best is the ocean-like response which a whole congregation sends back to the minister of God, and up to Heaven. Therefore there is room for every form in which we have been accustomed to hear the sound of sacred praise; and it would be a calamity were our liberty

abridged, and our ecclesiastical treasure diminished, by the exclusive establishment of one alone.

On these principles, and in this mode, the Psalter becomes a Christian liturgy. It is a chief portion of Scripture; and all Scripture is given by inspiration. The divine design may be inferred from the evident adaptation, and the actual universal use; as truly as when we reason that wheat was meant to be the bread of man, because it has the properties which yield him such healthful nutriment, and because it has been his actual food in every age and in every climate. Such nourishment for the spirit of prayer the soul has found in the Psalter; so has it fed, and blessed God; and the knowledge that David ever placed a Psalm in the hand of Asaph and his brethren, or that our Saviour with His Apostles sang an hymn, which was but a Psalm or a number of Psalms, at His sacramental Supper, or that St. Paul bade Christians speak to one another in Psalms, is not needed to assure us that this is a liturgy given by the Holy Ghost.

Nor shall we now pause to assert that thus the rightful claim of all our liturgical worship is established, nor to dwell on the familiar argument that if a form is sufficient to bear up the imagination when devotion soars in song, as much at least may it sustain the frail attention when devotion but walks or heavily toils on its ordinary road of supplication. We will rather praise God that He has given us all which He knew to be best adapted to our need, that so our joy might be full. He did not cause His word of revelation to be

written out in the form of protracted discourses, which should simply demand and weary the exercise of the patient intellect. He gave us histories, lives, letters, parables, prayers and psalms. As He has clothed the mountains with forests and with clouds, and spread over the vales their mantle of soft beauty, so has He poured over His word the glory of poetry, and made the imaginative faculty its servant if not its interpreter. We will praise Him for the harp of David, and for the power and the permission to combine within His temple, in His service, the melody of all lofty or touching music with the solemn joy or tenderness of that devotion which brings us nearest to the angels.

Such a rule of worship cannot be enjoyed and observed without the obligation of a sacred trust, a talent more precious by far than the highest gifts or productions of the uninspired intellect of man. They whose liturgical forms are "holiness to the Lord," they whose chief hymns have been given them by the Holy Ghost, must themselves be holy, or they do despite to the Spirit of grace, whose very words they utter, whose very thoughts become their thoughts. While we listen, while we sing, we are as if upon the side of the mountain, on whose summit the Lord talks with Moses and Elias. It is good to be there ; and we could linger there, were it permitted, and satisfy our souls. But it is in vain if the echoes do not remain in the heart and in the Church, throughout the season of toil, of probation and of pilgrimage. The songs inspired from heaven must make us strong for all Christian labors ; must

breathe over our minds the sanctification from which they proceeded ; and must lift us up to real anticipations of the new song of the redeemed. That they who have such an inheritance of all but celestial worship should be behind any others in practical sanctity, in missionary zeal, or in mutual charity, would be a reproach which, with God's help, we must never suffer to be recorded or uttered. But it will be, unless we are defended by humble prayer and steady watchfulness against the snare which lies in the mere admiration of our own possessions, whatever be the nature of those possessions. The stately temple as well as the noble mansion, the eloquent pastor as well as the delightful friend, the majestic liturgy as well as the charming music of hall or home, can gratify the taste, the imagination and the sentiment which rejoice that they are our own, and leave us there, no nearer to our Saviour, no more emancipated from the world, no more prepared for glory. It is one of the chief dangers of a Church so rich as ours in all which should be loved. May all who, in our constant services, fill their remembrance with all the words of the Psalter, have grace to guide their lives by the first of them all, " Blessed is the man that hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, and hath not sat in the seat of the scornful ; but his delight is in the law of the Lord : " then shall they, through all their days, and beyond, in the years of eternity, unite with all blessed beings in the closing strain, " Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord ! "

Sermons on the Liturgy.

SERMON VI.

THE LITURGY IN ITS RELATIONS TO CHRISTIAN UNION.

JOHN COTTON SMITH, D. D.

ST. JOHN, xvii. 21.—“That they all may be one.”

ISAIAH, lvi. 7.—“Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.”

MY subject—THE LITURGY IN ITS RELATIONS TO CHRISTIAN UNION—leads me to speak of those features of the Liturgy which adapt it to be a form of prayer for all people, and to promote that unity among Christians for which our Saviour prayed.

The evils of division among Christians are so apparent and terrible, that it is high time the subject of Christian Union received more serious consideration. We need the concurrent views of many observers at different points of observation; and as astronomers gazing into the starry heavens from their many watch-towers, penetrate at last the secrets of the order and harmony of the universe, so shall we, by diligent comparison, arrive, perhaps, at the great laws of unity which must prevail in the visible kingdom of Christ.

That there are such laws we cannot doubt. To deny

it would be to affirm that the ideal Christian Church, towards which the actual manifestation of it in the world must constantly tend, is out of all analogy with every other department in the universe. The most minute and apparently isolated facts resolve themselves into systems ; these systems again are bound together in still wider systems ; complex laws, as we ascend higher in the scale of being, unfold their complex operations and assume simpler forms, and so we go from infinite diversity to a higher and higher unity, until we find one universe in one God.

This unity, we should naturally suppose, also, must be the final consummation of the Church on earth ; for the nearer we come to Christ in spiritual experience, the nearer shall we be to the spirit which prevailed when the Church, springing from beneath His feet as He ascended into Heaven, was one. And this natural expectation ripens into confidence when we catch the tones of that wonderful prayer which our great High Priest offered for us as He was about to ascend the altar of sacrifice, "That they all may be One, even as Thou art in me and I in Thee, that they also may be One in us."

This unity, if once attained, would naturally express itself in common worship. It is a question, therefore, which it becomes us to consider, what form this common worship would most reasonably be expected to assume. Each one of the many divisions of Christendom should consider this in relation to the peculiar form which is used by itself. This I purpose

now doing in regard to the Liturgy, that we may see how far it is fitted to be a Common Prayer for all people, and how far its adoption is therefore calculated to promote the unity we desire.

The one great indispensable characteristic which such a form must possess is *universality*. Let us see, then, what claims the Liturgy has to universality :

I. In its origin and the process of its growth.

II. In its harmony with and adaptation to human nature.

III. In the possibility of its use among all diversities of religious opinion, where fundamental truth is held.

I. In the first place, then, we are to consider its universality in its origin and the process of its growth.

It may seem to savor somewhat of self-glory for those of us who enjoy the use of the Liturgy to enlarge upon its excellence and its adaptation to all people ; but it must be remembered that the Liturgy is not the result of our wisdom or choice. We did not make it ; we find ourselves in possession of it, a heritage handed down to us from the great Past. We are considering, let it be remembered, *the* Liturgy—the Christian Liturgy—a term which, in ecclesiastical history, has a meaning so distinct that it is impossible to mistake it. We find through the whole of history one liturgical type prevailing under a vast number of modifications. In different parts of the Christian world we find Liturgies peculiar to each locality, but all adhering with fidelity to the universal type, and therefore all constituting

only different and slightly varied forms of the one Christian Liturgy. The existence of four great Liturgies in early times, bearing the names respectively of St. Peter, St. James, St. Mark and St. John, closely resembling each other, indicate one primitive liturgical type from which they sprung. The successive developments of Christian doctrine left their impress upon the Liturgy in these principal, or in other minor forms. The Liturgy of St. John, received originally in the British Isles, was modified by the then pure Liturgy of the Roman Church. At last, but only a few hundred years before the Reformation, the primitive liturgical form was corrupted. The great work of the Reformation in England, after opening the Scriptures to the common people, was to restore the primitive type of the Christian Liturgy. We have, therefore, in the Liturgy which our Church uses to-day, essentially the type and form of the universal Liturgy, springing, like a majestic tree, from Apostolic soil, and widening the vast sweep of its branches over the Christian world.

Such being the origin and growth of the Liturgy, it is easy to see what elements of universality have entered into it, as it has come down through the ages. While the original type has been faithfully preserved, each great epoch in the Church has touched the Liturgy with a living power, blotting out details of light or shade not in harmony with the whole, and adding new and still more attractive hues. We have glanced already at the bare external facts of its history, so as to catch some idea of the law and method of its

growth. But we shall have a deeper impression of its universal character, if we see to what formative influences it has been subjected, and how wonderfully it has come in contact with and been moulded by the vast experience and development of the Christian Church. We first find it a pure and sweet fountain, springing up from Apostolic depths, like

——“Siloa’s brook that flow’d
Fast by the oracle of God.”

As it flows on through the generations, like the river of Eden, it is divided “into four heads.” One, reflecting the gorgeous hues of the East, bears the name of the martyr Bishop and Saint of Jerusalem. Another, warmed by the suns and glowing sands of Africa, and by its genial heat alone keeping the life-blood in cold and decrepit Churches, has come down to us with the character and traditions of the second Evangelist. The third, a grand, impetuous stream, like the great Apostle whose name it bears, is destined to flow down through the Roman civilization, and bathe the shores of Latin Christendom through all their vast extent. The last, rising in the East, peaceful and serene, like the gentle disciple whom Jesus loved, flows to the distant West. From thence, with the consecration of the martyr-blood of Gaul, it finds its tranquil way to the British Isles, and mingling at last with the swelling tide which comes pouring down through the Latin Church, in one broad stream, bearing upon its bosom the riches of all the generations through which it has

flowed, it sweeps majestically on through the present age to the vast millennial sea.

In the process of development through which the Liturgy has passed, it has been enriched by the spoils of each great victory which the Church has gained over the hosts of error. The conflict with the Arian heresy gave to the Liturgy the Nicene Creed, and the Creed which bears the great name of Athanasius. The mighty warfare carried on by Augustine against Pelagius brought out from the treasury of the Scriptures many a truth as to the corruption and helplessness of our nature, which has found its way into the Liturgy, in the form of supplication or praise. The victories of Anselm, in rescuing from the grasp of error and bestowing upon the Church the full and compact doctrine of the Atonement, can be traced in subsequent additions and omissions, recognizing the sole merit of Christ ; and in the terrible contest with Rome in the sixteenth century, the martyr-fires consumed the base alloy which the last few hundred years had added, and left the pure gold of primitive and Apostolic truth.

The product of such an origin and such a growth, enriched through its whole development by such elements of universality, must have broad and deep relations to human nature ; and this leads us to the consideration of the second point.

II. The universality of the Liturgy in its relations to human nature.

It grows out of the very fact of the universality of its origin and growth, that the Liturgy should be in

harmony with the universal elements, experiences and wants of our nature. Whatever has been merely temporary and accidental in the history of the Christian Church, if it has embodied itself at all in the Liturgy, has, by the peculiar process to which the Liturgy has been subjected, been finally thrown off, and only those features which are of universal interest and application have remained. For it is evident that only that which found an echo in the heart of generation after generation would be introduced, or, if introduced, retain its place. The Liturgy is accordingly the embodiment of the Christian instinct of worship. If through all those ages in which the Liturgy has been used, beginning with Apostolic times, and reaching down through the period of the Reformation to our own day, there has been a realization of the spiritual wants of man, a true idea of the great facts of redemption, then in the Liturgy we necessarily have the recognition of those wants and the presentation of those redemptive facts. And it can hardly be supposed that in all that vast period, and amid such rich and varied influences, there is a single spiritual want which has not found expression, or a single fact of the great plan of redemption which has not been set forth in all its saving power. It is to be remembered that we have had all this time two constant factors : human nature has been the same, and the plan of redemption has been the same, revealed as fully, in all its facts, at first as now. Worship, which is the utterance of human nature under the influence of these facts, must, in the

course of time, utter every possible experience of the soul, as moved by every conceivable aspect of the revelation of God. Now these utterances of worship have been registered in the Liturgy, and all our profound experiences, the most delicate touches of feeling, the loftiest aspirations of the spirit, have been crystalized, so to speak, in a permanent and symmetrical form.

But there is more than this in its universal harmony with and adaptation to human nature. If we analyze our mental and moral being, we shall find how wonderfully the Liturgy stands related to that being in all the principal aspects in which it can be regarded.

Take first the *intellect*. It is not too much to claim that the Liturgy has the great characteristics of a work of genius, embodying the highest powers, and adapted to satisfy the largest requirements of the intellect. It is not necessary that a work of genius should be the product of one mind. Indeed, the grandest results of genius are the products of the universal mind of the race. The British Constitution is thus one of the most amazing works of genius, and yet it is the product of the whole English mind. Neither is it necessary that the production of a work of genius should be a conscious operation contemplating the final result. It has been said of the great architects who, from generation to generation, built up the mighty cathedrals of Europe, working under the inspiration of an instinct higher than themselves, "They builded wiser than they knew." And so this work of the ages is the unconscious product of the instinct of the Church, and has

the fullest characteristics of a work of genius. For what is it that we find in a work of genius? Its chief characteristic is that it is organic—a creation—the expression of some central idea working itself out in every minutest part. Every portion of such a work must be vitally related to every other portion, and there must be a unity in and through them all. It is also true of the highest products of genius, that the great archetypal idea is repeated constantly in higher and higher forms, just as the same type runs on through all the processes of creation, but becoming more beautiful and wonderful at each successive stage. Let us look at the Liturgy and see if it has these characteristics. We have evidently a great central idea as the vitalizing principle of the whole—the idea of worship. But in the comprehensive idea of worship is included the expression of all the religious emotions, and the recognition of those truths by which the emotions are excited and sustained. Penitence, faith, thanksgiving, praise, adoration, supplication, intercession, sacrifice, all enter into the idea of worship, and all must be pervaded by the great truths of the Gospel, so that what might be otherwise mere transient emotion may be transformed into permanent principle by the influence of the truth. In the Liturgy this central idea, in one or the other of its aspects, like a system of nerves and muscles, pervades the whole structure, and binds in vital union each part to all. See, for a moment, with what symmetry this formative idea disposes the various portions of the service of prayer and praise; how log-

ically it unfolds itself from step to step ; how orderly is its development, and how the all-pervading law penetrates to every minutest detail. The worshipper is first brought into that attitude in which every true worshipper must stand—a realization of his filial relation to God through penitence and forgiveness. The confession and declaration of absolution are followed by the “Our Father.” The first impulse of the heart in this recognized relation is praise, and the Liturgy, reflecting this fact in our nature, embodies in the Venite the call to praise. But the soul, not yet so strong as to soar upon its own wings of adoration, must be borne up for a while, and so it is lifted upon the eagle wings of the Psalms. Then it is prepared for flights of its own, by instruction from the Scriptures, first from the Old Testament, looking forward in spirit and prophecy to the New. And lest the subordination of instruction to worship should fail to be expressed, between the Old and the New we have a glorious burst of praise in Te Deum, binding together, in idea, the two Covenants, and suggesting the harmony between them. After the New Testament, praise is again the instinct of the renewed nature. Then what we have received at any and all times as instruction, is summed up in a statement of our belief ; and now, through all these exercises, if they have been rightly used, the soul is ready for supplication and intercession. But this, by a law of our nature, grows more intense, and the corresponding idea in the service changes the form into that of the Litany, with short and passionate exclamations,

the repeated petitions of the people in the same words.

But the central idea unfolds itself in new forms, taking all the elements which have preceded up into a higher sphere in the Communion, which is the culminating act of Christian worship. We stand here, too, upon profounder theological truth. The law of God, in all its vast requirements, fitly precedes the setting forth of the Saviour as a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. The Gospel and Epistle lead us into the very arcana of Revelation, and amid the lowliest expressions of penitence, the most joyful assurances of forgiveness, and the loftiest ascriptions of praise, we renew the scene of the Last Supper, and worship ends in the spiritual offering and sacrifice of ourselves, and in the symbolism of our incorporation into Christ.

Thus analyzed, the Liturgy reveals the great characteristics of a work of the highest genius, and the correspondence between it and the laws of the human mind must enable it to satisfy the permanent and universal demands of the intellect.

Much that has already been said, serves to show its relation to the *emotional* part of our nature. But it may be well for us to see still further how the Liturgy is adapted to excite the emotions, and how the emotions find their most fitting expressions in its accents of prayer and praise. The law of our nature is that the emotions are excited by the presentation of objects which are so constituted as to move our hope or fear, our hatred or love. It is a remarkable fact, too, that

the best and holiest emotions are excited gradually. They are not to be called into exercise by violent methods, and the process by which sympathetic responses of love and devotion are secured, must be one in which the grounds of these emotions slowly unfold themselves. The Liturgy, growing as it has out of the instinct of the Church, conforms to this psychological law. There are at first no passionate appeals, nothing intense in the expressions of devotion. All is calm and tranquil, adapted to an unemotional condition of the mind. But ere long truths and facts begin to come up to view, which let in a gleam of light and heat upon the emotional nature. When the mind has been thoroughly penetrated with Scriptural truth, and has summed up, in audible utterance, the facts of Redemption, then the emotional nature has become excited, and now the strongest expressions lose all exaggeration and become the natural utterances of the soul. We prostrate ourselves before the throne of God, and beg for mercy as miserable sinners. Electric sympathies bind us to other hearts; their joys and sorrows become ours. In our moments of deepest penitence, and the raptures of our highest devotion, none are forgotten. We intercede for rulers in Church and State, for travelers by land or sea. In this ardor of our love, which has thus been kindled at the altar of devotion, we have forgiven, and we pray even, for our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers. And then our sympathizing thoughts turn to those who are in trouble and sorrow. The weary, heart-sick prisoner and captive; the widow

and fatherless children, who in the fresh agony of grief seek the living inmate of another world among the graves, we commend to the defence and protection of the Lord. But all these emotions, thus stirred and exercised, are without satisfaction and peace, except as the glorious presence of the Saviour moves before the mind and they can rest upon him. And then relief is found for feelings, which have no other fitting object, in those passionate exclamations in which all our hopes are staked upon his sacrifice: "By thine agony and bloody sweat, by thy cross and passion, by thy death and burial, by thy glorious resurrection and ascension, good Lord deliver us."

It is wonderful to notice, in the Communion Office, the correspondence to this law of our emotional nature. Our emotions are now supposed to be in the liveliest exercise. We gather in sweet affectionate intercourse around the table of our Lord. What deep and ardent expressions of humility and love now, in all the truthfulness of nature, tremble upon our lips! We bewail our sins and wickedness; the remembrance of them is grievous unto us, the burden of them is intolerable. The preciousness of the blood-shedding of Christ, and the innumerable benefits of His passion, are again and again suggested to the mind. His exceeding great love, His blessed passion and precious death, echo the feelings of our hearts, and we lose all thought of figure and symbol, in the reality, to our aroused emotions, of the reception of His precious body and blood.

It is this characteristic of the Liturgy that makes it

an object of affection to those by whom it is used. These emotions become intertwined with it, they hang upon it, like rich clusters of grapes upon the trellis which supports them, bound to it by the ties of association, and ripening upon it to their full perfection. This cannot be the case, unless there is a fixed and permanent form around which the affections can cluster. We can never know how vastly our emotional nature is indebted to it as an object of our affections. It has entered, year after year, with its exhaustless wealth into our spiritual being ; and as the sweet birds, caught from the wild-wood, make melody for us in our homes, so these winged words have been imprisoned in the mysterious chambers of memory, and by day and by night make sacred music to the soul.

A work so universal as this cannot leave untouched the remaining aspect in which our nature may be regarded. It must have its harmonious relations with and adaptations to the *will*. The emotions lie but just behind the will, and that which so profoundly stirs the emotions cannot but lay its hand upon the voluntary faculties of the mind. A great subject is thus opened to us, though we can only allude to it—the Liturgy as a discipline in individual and national life. Its power in the formation of character is one of the points in which its vast universality is most clearly to be seen.

The method of this influence is analogous to what we find in all the great forces of nature. The usual operation of the laws of nature is by incessant pressure of influence. Gravitation is a constant force—acting

at all times—its agency felt no more sensibly at one time than another, and yet it is a power which holds the universe together. The vast iceberg which is swept down by ocean currents into summer seas, is not smitten and shattered by the lightning's stroke, but, under the constant influence of the sun, the huge mass melts silently away. This is the method of the influence of the Liturgy upon the will. It subjects it constantly to repetitions of the same pressure. It urges the will towards duty and holiness, by gentle but incessant constraint. It puts men in a position where they must be either hypocritical or sincere worshippers, and obliges them to make the choice.

As this law is best illustrated by instances of its operation, it may not be inappropriate to refer to some touching evidences, in the life of the great Dr. Johnson, of the influence of the solemnities of the Church upon his religious life. On Good Friday, 1764, after those services which set before us the very scene of the mysterious sacrifice of the cross, deeply moved to self-examination and amendment of life, he writes in his journal: "I have made no reformation; I have lived totally useless, and more sensual in thought. This is not the life to which Heaven is promised." And he adds his earnest purpose to lead a different life. On Easter Day, under the influences of the glorious events commemorated in this festival, his will is powerfully moved by the thrilling service in which he has engaged. "I prayed," he says, "for resolution and perseverance to amend my life. O God, grant me to re-

solve aright and keep my resolutions, for Jesus Christ's sake."

The point to which I would finally ask your attention, and to which I shall very briefly refer, is the universality of the Liturgy in relation to diversities of religious opinion. The theory upon which the Liturgy is constructed, is the embodying in it of all essential and fundamental truth, and the exclusion of that which is mere matter of individual opinion. If it is necessary to recognize in public worship the peculiar views which as a part of the Christian family, we hold, then the universality of the Liturgy, in this respect, would be an objection rather than a benefit; but in that case sectarianism, or separation upon points not essential, must be regarded as the right and normal condition of the Church. And since there are few who will admit this, we must conclude that diversities of religious opinion, outside of that which is deemed absolutely fundamental, ought not to interfere with unity of worship. But if this is the case, we must have a form of worship from which these individual peculiarities are excluded, and which yet embodies the great truths recognized by the Universal Church. Now the Liturgy meets just these requisitions. I do not see how any one of the Evangelical Churches, holding the fundamental truths of the Gospel as contained in the Universal Creeds, could find any difficulty, so far as principle is concerned, in its use. But to bring the matter directly to a test. The Baptist would find, in this service of worship, nothing that would contravene his

peculiar views. He might still retain his own opinions as to the mode and the subjects of Baptism, and yet use every word of the Liturgy appointed for public worship. The Presbyterian, the Congregationalist, the Dutch Reformed, may hold what views they please as to the Calvinistic system, or methods of Church government and organization. The Liturgy stands grandly aloof from such questions, and no word which it contains need disturb the most earnest advocate of these particular theological views. Or, take the Methodist; his Arminianism will not be rudely shocked by any accent here of supplication or praise. And yet, all these find here that which they all acknowledge to be the sum and substance of fundamental Christian truth. The very process of the growth of the Liturgy has ensured this, for everything local, transient, and individual has been eliminated, and that only which has the sanction of the Universal Church has been retained.

Now it may be said that our proposal of the Liturgy as a basis for Christian union, is a sectarian position on our part, and that it is simply asking all men to agree with us. Well, we must stand somewhere, and labor for Christian union from some given point. If the mere fact that we stand somewhere is sectarianism, then we are justly liable to the charge. But does our position involve anything sectarian? We ask for unity in worship, and our very position is that of the abandonment of everything individual and transient for the permanent and universal. We ask that all but fundamental truth, universally acknowledged to be

such in worship should be given up; and then the question will be as to universality and general adaptation and adoption between the forms of prayer in the Liturgy, and the forms of prayer which are furnished for congregations in extemporaneous worship. There can be little doubt, it seems to us, that if there ever is a realization of unity in worship, it will be on a liturgical basis, and after the model of an historic Liturgy.

We have thus considered the Universality of the Liturgy :—

I. In its origin and the process of its growth.

II. In its harmony with and adaptation to human nature.

III. In the possibility of its use among all diversities of religious opinion, where fundamental truth is held.

There are many indications of a tendency, throughout the Christian world, to visible unity and a common liturgical worship. The great difficulty with which this tendency has to contend is the conviction that Christian union is not possible, or, if possible, not desirable. But this shows a strange blindness to the designs of God in His government of the Church, and a strange indifference to the beauty of that harmony and concord which called forth from the Psalmist the exclamation : “ Behold how good and pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.” This blindness to the certain signs of the times is as if one should stand in the presence of the morning, as one flush of golden light after another shoots up the east-

ern sky, and yet declare that it heralds no coming day. This want of appreciation of the beauty and blessedness of Christian union, is as if one should be surrounded by a chaos of grand and lovely objects, and yet desire no all-powerful hand to reduce them into the order and harmony of one magnificent whole. We love diversity of sounds, the infinitely varied accents of Christian experience, the multitudinous offering up of prayer and praise. But we would have them all, the pealing tones or the softest melody, the plaintive supplication or the exultant shoutings of triumph, swell forth from one grand instrument, vast as Christianity itself, and touched by the infinite skill of the great Master's hand.

Upon all those to whom the Christian Liturgy has come down through the ages, a most solemn responsibility is imposed. They possess that which is the type of a universal worship. Let them see to it that they send it broadcast with the everlasting Word of God over the world. And let the longing for Christian union and common worship blend with our desires and aspirations for a higher and better life, even as we pray that we may follow the blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living, on the very ground that God has "knit together his elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of His Son Christ our Lord."

Sermons on the Liturgy.

SERMON VII.

THE LITURGY OF HEAVEN.

A. CLEVELAND COXE, D. D.

ST. LUKE, xi. 2.—Thy will be done, as in Heaven, so in earth.

THE public worship of Almighty God is too much looked upon, in our day, as a mere exercise for the edification of men. That it is, besides, an institution for the glory of God, having close connection with the relations we bear, as one communion, with the angels in Heaven, and the spirits in Paradise, seems almost forgotten. Probably, thousands of pious people are in the spiritual condition which the aged Baxter regarded as the mistake of his religious life, making too little of the greatness and excellency of love and praise. He added of his later life, “my conscience now looketh at love and delight in God, and praising Him, as the top of all my religious duties, for which it is that I value and use the rest.” No wonder, non-conformist though he was, that he himself compiled a liturgy, and said, “I cannot be of their opinion that think God will not accept him that prayeth by the Common Prayer Book.”

In our private prayers we are encouraged to use any degree of familiarity with our heavenly Father that is consistent with reverence and godly fear. But the public worship of God is a sacrifice to His glory, which, in its very nature, demands much of the order and beauty of a better world. We must remember what is said of the close communion that subsists between the Church Militant, and the heavenly Jerusalem, with its "innumerable company of angels." Not only are the faithful called "a royal priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ," but they are also said to make known "to principalities and powers, in heavenly places, the manifold wisdom of God." It concerns us to consider, also, what is said of Christ as "reconciling all things to the Father . . . whether they be things in earth or things in Heaven." Of the identity and unity of the visible and invisible Church, it is also said, "that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together, in one, all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him." The angels are said to "desire to look into" the things which the Church magnifies and shows forth in her perpetual celebration of redeeming love: and the amazing fact is revealed to us, that because Christ took not on Him the nature of angels, but became man, therefore redeemed men shall be superior to angels, and shall be their judges.* Angels are creatures of God, but, we are begotten in

* Heb. ii. 16. 1 Cor. vi. 3.

Christ, to be partakers of the Divine Nature, and to be called, in a higher sense "the sons of God."* Nay, we are to sit with Christ in his throne, and to reign with him, forever, as "kings and priests."† These intimate relations teach us not to marvel that, from the beginning, the Church on earth has been taught of God to harmonize all her public services with those of Heaven. If the heavenly worship is liturgical, it cannot be that He who is preparing a mansion there, for us, would have us do His will on earth, otherwise than as it is done in Heaven.

The incarnation and exaltation of the Son of God have introduced a new song into the heavenly choirs, and added fresh perfections to that which was perfect before. But, my use of the text is already, in some degree, made plain. No Christain will deny that from the foundation of the world, the Lamb of God has been, as such, the common object of adoration to angels and men. In the very earliest intimation that is given us with respect to the worship of Heaven, the common interest of the universe in Christ is more than suggested. The earth was fitted up to be the scene of redemption, and of the creation and development of a new order of glorified beings. The foundation of it was laid on the Rock of Ages; on Him who "upholdeth all things by the Word of His Power." Christ was the corner-stone; and so it is written, "When I laid the corner-stone thereof, then the morning-stars

* 2 Peter, i. 4. 1 John, iii. 1.

† Rev. iii. 21.

sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy !”* So it was done, in Heaven, from the beginning ; so it is now ; and so it ever shall be. Christ is the centre of the heavenly worship, as of ours on earth, and there can be no reason why if their worship is liturgical, ours should be different. On the contrary, in the manner, as in the matter, the principle of spiritual worship must be always and everywhere the same. It shall be my aim to show, besides, that we are not left, to our own fancies, even in the application of this rule, but that God himself, from the beginning, has shaped the worship of His church on earth, and given it to us, after the heavenly pattern : that this pattern is a Liturgy of infinite richness and beauty, and that those who rightly receive it, do his will on earth as it is done in Heaven.

Reason, itself, requires that we should conceive of the heavenly service as a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, ordered with ritual dignity and harmony. Its ultimate perfections are unfolded to us, in the Apocalypse, as consisting in the common adoration of multitudes whom no man can number ; and, may God grant that we ourselves may be included, every one of us, in that glorious fellowship of the redeemed, with the divers orders of angels ! But is it possible to conceive of that innumerable company, as indulging, every one, his own personal raptures, and giving vent to his own psalm and doxology, without tune or time ? Does

* Job, xxxviii. 7.

Babel lend us our ideas of the New Jerusalem ! Are we to suppose that a single ministrant is a voice to all the rest, uttering his own fervours of spirit, in words of private genius, without even a responsive Amen ? Or does a solitary angel mumble, in an unknown tongue ? Or do they celebrate a pompous pageant, while ten thousand times ten thousand merely look on, or kneel down, mechanically, with theatrical signals, and promptings ! We know that they worship, "in spirit and in truth." Theirs is a reasonable service and proceeds with decency and order. Common sense decides, then, that it cannot be other than a worship of method and beautiful concord. Their heavenly instincts may supply the rubric, but all proceeds with ritual solemnity : the voices of the angelic ministrants are liturgically intermixed with antiphons and responses, with Amens and Alleluias.

What reason itself prescribes is established by revelation, in the closing book of the New Testament : and as the principle of the text covers all things, and makes Heaven the standard of what God wills, we infer that it supplies the law of Christian worship. As soon as St. John, in Patmos, had received and recorded his revelation of the way in which God is worshipped, by those who see His face, in heaven, a flood of light was thrown upon the principle that God would be worshipped here, as there ; just as He would be obeyed in other respects. The Revelation also teaches us just how far the Jewish liturgies were

figures of the true.* We see the glorious pattern after which they were moulded. We see the Lamb upon the throne, and, in the light of that great central figure we understand the lamb upon the Hebrew altars. We have been too much accustomed to reason, in the wrong direction, as if Christ borrowed his name instead of imparting it; as if He were the Lamb of God, by a Jewish figure, and not rather the great substance of which the Jewish figures were but shadows. Here in fact is the great secret of all that was ordained of God in the Ritual of the Tabernacle and of the Temple. The worship of the Lamb of God, the Eternal Liturgy of the Heaven of heavens, was accommodated in types, to the faithful on earth. Hence, on the day of Pentecost, when the fire of Heaven fell upon the Christian Church, the old types and shadows were consumed as dross, but the spiritual part of the Jewish system was glorified and perpetuated. The inspired apostles added "hymns and spiritual songs," to the ancient psalms. The Eucharist took the place of bloody sacrifices. The Epistles and gospels were to be read as lessons, together with the law and the prophets. The synagogues virtually, if not literally, became the churches. Their ancient forms were filled out and made complete in Christ, and by the illumination of the Holy Ghost. Thus, the church was never without a liturgy for a single day. For the Christian liturgies were not created; they grew. They were gradually developed from those

* Heb. ix. 24.

of the Jews, as the light of morning from the twilight. By degrees what was Mosaic melted away, and constantly, during the apostles' day, Christian elements were added. But just as the Decalogue, and the Sabbath and the Paschal, and Pentecost and the Old Testament itself, found their place in the New Dispensation, so the great liturgic system of Moses was refined and spiritualized into Christian worship. The one had been a shadow of heavenly things; but in the other, Heaven was brought down to earth.

In the Apocalypse, then, was finally unfolded the grand original in the heavens, to which by slow degrees, God had made the worship of His saints conform. But it may be instructive, at this stage of our inquiries, to observe more closely by what steps, and with what wonderful forecast, God led the faithful into the knowledge and practice of His will, and provided the Church of the New Covenant with a system of worship, in the godly observance of which, "His will is done on earth, as it is done in heaven."

We revert to the position that "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," and unveiled, at last, in the Revelation of St. John, has been the animating principle of all authorized worship ever since the world began. Cain would not do the will of God on earth as it is done in heaven, and so there was no lamb on his altar; but God overthrew it. When Noah renewed the institution of sacrifice, after the flood, there was a revelation made to him, by a physical image, of the rainbow which encircles the Lamb, in

Heaven ; but, it was not till the whole plan of the atonement was more clearly exhibited, in the Paschal redemption, out of Egypt, that a grand liturgic system was made its perpetual record, and at the same time a foreshadowing of the true Paschal Lamb, and of spiritual redemption, by His blood. Closely as this liturgy was conformed to things in heaven, however, it was necessarily typical, and contained much that must be done away, by the fulfillment of its types, in Christ. It was congruous, therefore, that, as Christ should draw near, there should be a gradual preparation for a more spiritual worship ; for a development, that is, of the heavenly element in the Jewish liturgy and for the superannuation of its material and non-essential parts. And it is beautiful to see, how, without introducing any apparent instability into the Mosaic system, God did, in fact, provide for just such a genial development of the Jewish into the Christian worship. Under the patriarchal dispensations, the law of sacrifice had been comparatively unlimited. Every where the patriarchal priest offered his bullocks and rams, and upon almost all occasions. The sacrificial principle was not only connected with his prayers, in theory, but literally. When and where he prayed, there he offered sacrifice. "Thus did Job, continually."* When we think of the vast scale on which the Mosaic sacrifices, were instituted it would seem, at first, as if the succeeding dispensation had rather increased than lessened

* Job i. 5.

the material element of worship. But such was not the case, practically : and mighty were the consequences of that single provision of the law, which confined the sacrifices to Jerusalem. Unimportant as it may have seemed to the Jews, and unheeded as it may have been by us in reading the Scriptures, there is a momentous token of progress towards the gospel, in the precept which reads as follows : "Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest : but in the place which the Lord shall choose, in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings." It is wonderful, how much hinges on this provision, in the history of the Jews. It prepared for the eventual overthrow of the system of bloody sacrifices, and it is memorable also for its logical connection with the Christian Church. There was no apparent provision in the law, for other places of worship, but, as the Israelites found themselves restricted to the one place, Jerusalem, in the point of bloody sacrifices, so in the process of time grew up their local temples, or synagogues, all over their own land, and in every place where the Lord had scattered them. In these they worshipped every Sabbath-day, and at Jerusalem only once a year. Consequently, a system of worship grew up, of which the temple-sacrifices were the base, indeed, but in which the law and the Prophets were read, and prayers offered, without the blood of goats and of calves. It was the temple liturgy, without its offerings of blood ; yet deriving its character from the sacrifices and altars of Jerusalem, and

animated by their great principle. Our Lord found these synagogues, when he came, and he honoured the institution, as a part of His own plan. He frequented them with his disciples, and developed them into churches, by His Spirit and His Providence. As we have already seen, their liturgies became the Christian liturgies. For this, they seem to have been afore prepared, by His wisdom and His love, that so in every place, and not only in Jerusalem, men might worship the Father, in spirit and in truth.*

But to preserve the sacrificial character of worship, and to make all Christian prayer encircle the central figure of the Lamb, the blessed Eucharist takes the place of the sacrifices of the law. And it is important to note that the Supper of our Lord itself was no extemporized solemnity. It blossomed from rites of the law, like the perfect flower; and, then, legal sacrifices ceased. For that last Paschal Feast our Lord had all things "furnished and prepared." Everything proceeded, as by rubric, according to the order of the Jews. The Paschal being finished, the Eucharist was instituted, according to the Sabbath-evening service of the synagogues, and whoever compares the primitive liturgies with that office, will see that they are of common origin and in parts identical.† All was done not only decently, but according to the prescribed order. The Church merely perpetuated that order. St. Paul

* St. John, iv. 21-24.

† See that valuable work, "Freeman's Principles of Divine Service," Vol. ii. P. 2. p. 294.

praises the Corinthians because in spite of their faults in other respects, "they kept the ordinances, as he delivered them." Surely while we keep the same ordinances we may find our praise in theirs.

But, let us examine these ordinances by the light the same apostle gives us. When the prophet Malachi predicts the Christian dispensation, he describes the offering of a pure oblation, in every place, as one of its chief characteristics.* This language implies the Christian liturgy and its commemorative sacrifice; and it is, apparently, cited by St. Paul, when he maintains his own priesthood in contrast with the waning ministries of the law. In fact, he paraphrases the prophet, and assumes its fulfilment in himself, as a liturgist and a priest of the New Covenant.† He uses these very terms, as elsewhere he says that we Christians have an altar, more worthy than that of the Mosaic law. In fact the apostle's writings are full of these liturgic phrases, and allusions. He makes prominent the Christian Passover and Pentecost; and recognizes the breaking of bread, as the ordinary worship of Christians, for which they come together on the first day of the week.‡ These are considerations of primary importance if we would understand the spiritual worship which the Lord has ordained

* Mal. i. 11.

† Rom. xv. 16. Compare original Greek with the usage of the Septuagint. See Grinfield's *Nov. Test. Græc. Editio Hellenistica*.

‡ 1 Cor. v. 8. Acts xviii. 21. Acts xx. 16. 1. Cor. xi. 20. Acts xx. 7.

in His Church. The atoning sacrifice of the death of Christ, and His glorious resurrection are the central ideas, around which all Christian prayers and thanksgivings arrange themselves. They are called "spiritual sacrifices," for they have a sacrificial character derived from their connection with the Paschal Lamb of Calvary.* And as the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ Himself to be the perpetual memorial of His sacrifice, so the Eucharist is the grand liturgy, with which all other rites and services are harmonized. The Lord's Supper is the centre of Christian worship. Take away this Eucharistic principle and you may have a compilation of social prayers, but you can have no liturgy.

Nor can this simple statement of the scriptural nature and origin of liturgies excite any surprise if we go to the root of the matter, and see how necessary it is that it should be so, in view of the great truths of revelation. If the worship of God is perfect and complete in Heaven, let us reflect that the Church militant here on earth is in training to be the church triumphant hereafter. Of the whole liturgic system of the Hebrews, St. Paul asserts that it was a shadow of things yet to come ; that is, of the endless adoration of the Lamb in Heaven. According to the same apostle its substance was Christ.† It wanted nothing, but a less typical and more exclusively spiritual character to be Christian worship. Its carnal sacrifices were neces-

* 1 Pet. ii. 5.

† Col. ii. 17.

sarily done away when Christ came, but its liturgic structure could not be superseded, without a destruction of its conformity to the heavenly original. Certain it is that no hint is ever given us that such a change was designed, in the development of the Mosaic into the apostolic worship. When the apostles were solicitous about their appearance before magistrates, to testify of the gospel, they were commanded to take no thought beforehand, nor to premeditate. But, when their expanding views of the gospel, led them to exclaim, "Lord, teach us to pray," they received a very different answer. It is of vast significance too, that while our Lord provided them with a form of prayer, He compiled it from the forms of the synagogue, with which they were familiar. It is also significant that He introduced only one new feature,* into these Jewish forms ; that is to say, the petition for forgiveness on condition of exercising forgiveness. Thus He made the evangelical precept of love the complement of the Mosaic formularies, and taught them how to change the water of the law into the wine of the gospel. The text itself, was part of the Jewish worship ; Christ simply baptized it, and made it Christian. Therefore, we affirm the principle of liturgies in more ways than one, when we say, "Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth."

In the Old Testament, the priesthood of Christ Himself, is exhibited but for a moment, in hoary antiquity.

* See Freeman, Vol. i. p. 417. Note K.

Melchizedek comes forth, as from a cloud, and exhibits the bread and wine, and then disappears for ages. He is next beheld in Messiah's person, in the upper room of Jerusalem, taking the bread and wine and founding the New Dispensation. Between these two epochs was set up the Jewish priesthood, "unto the example and shadow of things in heaven:" and their holy places, made with hands, were "the figures of the true." Here, then, we may pause to compare the shadows, with what we now know of the substance: and we shall see clearly, that, it is only as heaven differs from ancient Israel, that the Christian Church must differ, in its spiritual worship.

When the headstone of the second temple was laid by Zerubbabel there seems to have been a solemnity like that I have already instanced in the laying of the corner-stone at the foundation of the world. The angelic worship was copied, while the stone was "brought forth with shoutings, crying grace unto it, grace unto it." But the inauguration of the Mosaic ritual is more noteworthy. When Moses and the children of Israel had overcome Pharoah and his hosts by faith and by the blood of the Passover, and when they had safely passed the Red Sea, the Hebrew liturgy was founded in the song of Moses and the responses of Miriam. But this was only a shadow: the substance is unfolded by St. John, in the vision of Heaven, where the Israel of God is seen by the sea of glass, celebrating their deliverance, through the blood of the Lamb, from the Prince of this world. It is written, not that

they *sang* once for all, but that they “*sing* the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.” When St. Paul was rapt up into Paradise and into the third heaven, he heard “unspeakable things, not lawful for man to utter.” There are joys and glories there, beyond all that have entered into the heart of other men : but still, it has pleased God, to reveal something by divers of His prophets and apostles, as well as by the figures of the ancient temple. How glorious is Ezekiel’s vision of the throne, and chariot of the Most High : and how wonderfully it accords with what St. John beheld in Patmos ! The rainbow that was exhibited to Noah, was but a faint symbol of that which encircles the glorious presence of God and the Lamb. The prophet Daniel beheld the Ancient of Days, and saw ten thousand times ten thousand stand before Him, and “thousand thousands that ministered unto Him.” But Isaiah not only describes the throne, he tells us of the Seraphims’ song, how they cried responsively, “Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts.” Eight hundred years later, St. John was favoured with a similar vision, in Patmos, and lo ! the same Seraphim, or perhaps the Cherubim were before him, singing the same hymn ; and he says “they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty, which was and is and is to come.” By faith, we may hear it now, and join ourselves to the heavenly choir, responding a fervent Amen.

But, in the Apocalypse, we have the full evangelical “pattern in the Mount.” There we see what is meant

by our being "kings and priests unto God." It is the patriarchs and apostles that lead the heavenly choirs: it is the ransomed that teach the angels a new song. None can so glorify God, for the overthrow of Satan, as those who have come out of great tribulations, and have overcome him "by the blood of the Lamb." Hence we see the four-and-twenty elders,—representing, probably, patriarchs and prophets, with the twelve apostles,—standing nearest the throne, with harps and golden vials; and we read, "they sang a new song, saying, Thou art worthy; . . . for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation, and hast made us, unto our God, kings and priests." To this majestic hymn, comes a response not less worthy of immortal tongues. Myriads answer with one voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." And then breaks in, apparently from the whole universe of God, the grand chorus, "Blessing and honour and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever." To this the four cherubs say Amen: and then there is a silent adoration, like that which concludes our services; "the four-and-twenty elders fell down and worshipped Him that liveth forever and ever."

Time fails us to follow the Evangelist in his visions of the glory that shall be revealed. But he is sometimes minute, even as to the rubrics of that heavenly liturgy. "*When* those living ones give glory, the

elders *fall down* before Him." All proceeds in order as a ceremonial, but not as a lifeless ceremony. Every word is heard and caught up, and responded to, and echoed, by the millions of the redeemed. "They are before the throne of God, and serve Him, day and night, in His temple." And poor as is our humble attempt to do "as in heaven, so in earth," who that has kept an Easter, in a well-ordered church, and in the worship of our own liturgy can fail to recognize its likeness, to the eternal Paschal Feast, above ! On that day, ten thousand altars of our own Anglo-Catholic communion, under every meridian, if not in every zone, and all round the world, are spread with the fair linen-cloth, and prepared for the Eucharistic Supper of the Lamb. As nearly as possible, with one voice, and certainly in the same words, thousands of thousands, at the same moment, worship the Crucified. The sun, going from East to West, looks down upon the same scene of devotion, renewed from hour to hour, as he rises upon successive lands. 'Tis one ring of church-bells all round the globe, and one Alleluia from all the kneeling sacramental host. At the appointed moment, is heard in every church—the same *Sursum Corda*—"Lift up your hearts." The answer comes, "we lift them up unto the Lord." "Let us give thanks unto our Lord God," says the celebrant, and the people answer, "it is meet and right so to do." When the minister turns to the altar and says, "It is very meet, right and our bounden duty," he adds the

Easter Preface, in these words, "but chiefly are we bound to praise Thee for the glorious resurrection of Thy Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, for He is the very Paschal Lamb which was offered for us, and hath taken away the sin of the world, who by His death hath destroyed death, and by His rising to life again hath restored to us everlasting life." And when the ministering elder hath said these words, then, with an outbreking of glorious music, or in plain responsive speech, they lift up their voice with one accord and glorify God, saying, "Therefore with angels and archangels, and with the whole company of heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious name, evermore praising Thee and saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of Thy glory ; glory be to Thee, O Lord, Most High. Amen."

Such is our passover, on earth, and I must leave it to the candid convictions of those who hear me, to institute a comparison between it, and the worship of the heavenly choirs. If the same spirit animates our services, and if all this be done in sincerity and truth, I am at loss to know how we could do more nearly on earth, as it is done in heaven. But, it ought to be remarked, that, the Church of the Apostles, so far as it is exhibited to us in the New Testament, seems to have worshipped in the same way. They too, "lifted up their voices with one accord." They said Amen to the minister's giving of thanks. When some, in Corinth, ventured to interrupt prescribed order, even in the exercise

of inspired gifts, St. Paul severely censures their conduct.* He cites the customs of the churches as law, and commands that all things should be done with systematic arrangement and beauty. Further it is to be observed that he gives one and the same principle as to praying and singing: "I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the understanding also." To sing out of a book, then, is the same, in principle, as praying out of a book. If the one is spiritual, so is the other; if the one is right in the sight of God, the other cannot be less so. But, if anything is formal, in worshipping out of a book, surely it must be the use of the psalms of David, distorted from their inspired shape, broken into modern stanzas and tagged with rhyme, and sung to formal tunes; for surely nothing of this kind was ever heard of in the days of Christ and His apostles. They used the Psalter with simple chants, such as have come down to us, in the tones of Ambrose and Gregory, from the synagogue and the temple, if not from the sons of Asaph, to whose musical skill they were commended by inspiration. Yet it is wonderful how many who have no scruple to sing, in tunes the most artificial, the pious numbers of Dr. Watts, can yet discover formalism in the nearest possible approach that may be made, in our days, to the singing of the psalms just as

* 1 Cor. xiv. and xi. 16.

they were given, when directed to "the chief musician" to be set to appropriate tunes. Let no one suppose that I object to either form of devotion: but, of the two I prefer that which inspiration has so often sanctioned, as when Habbakuk closes his glorious hymn with the words, "to the chief singer on my stringed instruments."

In all these matters, it becomes us to remember, we are primarily the creatures of habit. To many Christians nothing appears more cold and formal than an extemporaneous prayer; to others the Litany itself seems mechanical and tame. In the application of our principles, therefore, let us avoid all censure of others, and content ourselves with showing the lawfulness and the scriptural authority of that form of sound words, which we have received. Let us catch the spirit of that glorious Eucharistic hymn, which we habitually use, and which was brought down from heaven itself—the Gloria in Excelsis. "When He bringeth in the first begotten, into the world, He saith—let all the angels of God worship Him." And so they did worship Him, and the Evangelist tells us how, for, "suddenly, there was with the angel, a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and, on earth, peace, good-will towards men." So long as the apostolic church prolongs that strain, let the angelic hymn be sung, in the spirit of genuine good-will to men, and especially towards all "those who love our Lord Jesus Christ, in sincerity." For the liturgy is not ours, but theirs also. It was "given by

one Shepherd," and it was designed as the common heritage of "all who in every place call on the name of the Lord, both theirs and ours." Would to God it might be used again, as it was of old, and that the multitude of them that believe, might be united in the primitive confessions, and the primitive prayers. Would to God this harmony of praise to the Lamb, might fill the earth, and that so the sacramental host of God's elect might show to the world an undivided front, all "striving together for the faith of the gospel." But, if this is too much to be realized, among sinners, if it is never to be "done on earth as it is done in Heaven," Oh then, "Thy kingdom come!" "Thy kingdom come!" Yes, who would not anticipate the day, when they who were never thus harmonized on earth, shall all unite in the eternal liturgy of Heaven? The Lord hasten the day, when the little jealousies and disputes of time shall have passed away forever, with a thousand other things that disfigure the Militant Church, and when the Bride of Christ shall be seen, at last, in her beauty, having neither spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing! Oh, ecstatic thought, the harmony, the peace, the universal love of Heaven! We shall see eye to eye, at last, and worship heart with heart. But more, we shall see Jesus in the midst of the throne, the Lamb that was slain. We shall see patriarchs and apostles and every spirit made just, by faith, from righteous Abel, to the end of time. Little innocents shall be there, and martyrs and confessors, and virgin souls that follow the

Lamb whithersoever He goeth. But, O my soul, let each say for himself, shalt thou, too, be there : there in the New Jerusalem ; there where old things shall have passed away and where He that makes all things new shall wipe away all tears, and lead His flock to living fountains of water ! Shall I behold the rainbow that is around the throne, and the living stones that sparkle in those walls of the heavenly Zion, and the glory of God that doth lighten it, and God Himself who is the light thereof ! And when the white-robed elders bow before Him, shall there be a robe and a crown for me, and a palm-branch and a harp of gold ! And shall I lift up my voice in those eternal praises and everlasting hymns ? Even I a sinner, nay, perhaps, “ the chief of sinners ! ” The answer comes from those hymns of Heaven, that it is as the Saviour of sinners that the Lamb delights to be worshipped. They that are much forgiven shall love Him most, through all eternity, and praise Him with a rapture that seraphs never knew. And if there be joy among the angels over one repenting sinner, think how it shall be in heaven, when all the ransomed of the Lord shall have come to Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads ! Of that day’s service, we know the grand invitatory beforehand : “ Alleluia ! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth : let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready.”

And now unto Him that hath redeemed us by His blood, and hath made us, unto our God, kings

and priests ; to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, be glory and honour and blessing, and power and dominion, for ever and ever ! And let every creature say—AMEN.

Sermons on the Liturgy.

SERMON VIII.

THE BOOK OF PRAYER FOR THE HOUSE OF PRAYER.

RT. REV. WM. BACON STEVENS D. D.

ISAIAH, lvi. 7.—“ Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.”

IN all ages of the world, God has been worshipped. The Patriarchs bowed before Him by their altars of earth or stone ; the early Israelites assembled themselves around their divinely arranged tabernacle, when “ the ark of God abode under curtains ;” the later Jews presented to Him sacrifices in his holy temple at Jerusalem, or worshipped toward that holy house when dispersed abroad ; but the Christian, who has no central temple, no movable tabernacle, no sacrificial altars, worships God in houses built indeed by human hands, yet set apart for his service, bearing his name, and hence having full claim to the promise, “ in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.”

Under the Mosaic economy the temple which Isaiah here calls God’s house, was emphatically a “ house of prayer” in the enlarged sense of the word prayer, which

in this place means worship ; for the temple service was not confined to the offering up of prayers, but sacrifices were slain, incense was burned, psalms were sung, and well-drilled choirs with vocal and instrumental music filled the court of the Lord with sublimest song, as their antiphonal or choral strains rose like the sound of many waters unto heaven.

When, therefore, God speaks of his house being "an house of prayer for all nations," He intimates that the privileges which the Hebrew had of worshipping God in the temple, should be extended to all people. It is, in fact, a prediction which finds its truest fulfillment, now that the material temple of Jerusalem is demolished, for the true worship of God, which was then limited to one locality, is now co-extensive with the Church of Christ, as it is set up among the nations of the earth. It is as if He had said, "There shall be in all nations a house dedicated to My service, in which shall be offered unto Me true and holy worship," and the declaration thus accords with the language of Malachi, who, though borrowing his ideas from the temple service, yet expresses by them a great Christian idea, when he represents God as saying, "In every place incense shall be offered unto My name, and a pure offering, for My name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts."

The "incense," and "the pure offering," here spoken of, do not mean material incense and animal sacrifices, such as were presented under the Mosaic economy, but the incense of praise and the offering of prayer, the

two elements of devotion, which combined, make true and spiritual worship for Him who is a Spirit, and who must be worshipped in spirit and in truth.

The germ which lies at the root of all worship of God, is the aim to glorify God, and this is true of all worship, whether offered on earth or in heaven. This, indeed, is the great end of man's creation, as God himself says, "I have created him for My glory."

But we can glorify God only as we truly know God, and rightly worship God. Our worship is shaped by our knowledge ; our knowledge is the very basis of our worship. We know God aright only as we acquaint ourselves with him through his revealed word ; we can worship God aright only through the means of his own appointment, and those are prayer and praise. These are the elemental principles of all true worship on earth. In heaven, praise alone will occupy the tongues of angels and the redeemed ; but on earth, prayer and praise, like the two olive trees in the prophet's vision, must ever pour themselves through the two golden pipes, into the golden bowl, which feeds the seven lamps of the candlestick of the sanctuary, to keep ever bright the worship of Jehovah.

But how shall we offer this prayer and praise in the great congregation ? We cannot, each one for himself, speak out his own thoughts and emotions, for this would not be either decently, or in order. We must have a mouth-piece, and it is one of the chief functions of the ministry to lead the worship of the assemblies of God's people.

But how, again, shall this mouth-piece guide our worship? Shall he conduct it with extemporaneous prayer and praise? We say at once, no, with regard to praise; for we do not expect the minister, even though he might possess the poetic talent of a Milton, or Cowper, to rise and compose a psalm or an anthem at the moment, improvising the praise which the congregation are to offer to God; nor do we expect the organist or the choir, though the one was equal to Handel, and the other to the trained singers of the Sistine Chapel, to extemporize the music which shall be sung to the words of the minister.

But if we never lift up the voice of thanksgiving and melody, without careful preparation; if all our public praise of God is precomposed, and offered according to a definite formula, why should not our public prayer be likewise precomposed, and set in form, before the mind of the offerer? Why should one of the great elements of worship, and that one the most important and influential upon our lives and hearts, be left to the momentary and fluctuating fancies and feelings of the minister; and the other be carefully prepared in advance, be set to well arranged and published music, and be sung out of a recognized praise-book? Is the one of less moment than the other? The Apostle Paul places them on the same level when he says, "I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also; I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." And yet if in the

public worship of God we can sing with the spirit and sing with the understanding, only by uniting in pre-composed forms of praise ; is it not also true, that in the same public worship we can pray with the spirit and pray with the understanding best, when we unite in a precomposed form of prayer ? We say unhesitatingly then, that the mouth-piece of the congregation should, in prayer as well as praise, lead the worship according to a preëstablished form, put forth by proper authority in the church ; and in this assertion we are confirmed by the usage of the temple service, by the worship of the synagogue, by the words and the deeds of our Lord and his Apostles, by the testimony of the early Fathers, and by the liturgic experience and liturgic yearnings of the Christian world.

Shall we, however, permit each congregation to form its own Liturgy ? This would introduce a rivalry and confusion that would mar the worship of God, and occasion much wrangling and discord in the church. Besides, no congregation is stable ; it is composed of fluctuating elements, its members are ever changing ; and uneasy spirits would frequently be seeking to alter established usages and forms, to suit the whims, or fashion, or theology, of those who have itching ears and godless hearts. That which would be acceptable to-day, would be rejected to-morrow ; and a Liturgy, instead of being, as it should be, an anchor, holding the ark of Christ's church to the mooring-ground of eternal truth, amidst drifting currents and tossing seas and wrecking gales ; would be as the dog-vane on the

quarter-deck, blown about by every wind of doctrine, indicating nothing but the direction of the popular breeze, as it veered through all the cardinal points of the theological compass.

It being, then, improper for a congregation, in its worship of God, to permit each person to speak for himself; it being improper for the mouth-piece of each congregation to utter his own crude and ill-digested words of prayer in behalf of the people who should, but cannot truly unite with him; and it being improper that each congregation should frame its own Liturgy, and thus have a thousand forms clashing with and jostling each other in every Christian nation; the question again arises, Wherewith shall we come before the Lord, when we would worship Him in the beauty of holiness? And the answer which I give is this: Enter into God's House of Prayer with that Book of Prayer, which, framed by the constituted authorities of a great national church, shall most truly glorify God the Father; most truly exalt God the Son; most truly honor God the Holy Ghost; most truly reflect the spirit and doctrines of the Bible; most truly bear upward the devotions of the people; most truly guide the praises of the congregation; and most truly unite us with the Holy Catholic Church, that blessed company of all faithful people, in all places and in all ages of the world.

Can we find such a Liturgy? I answer, Yes. "The Book of Common Prayer and the administration of the Sacraments of the Protestant Episcopal

Church in the United States of America," answers to each of these requirements of public worship, and hence, is the true Book of Prayer for the House of Prayer.

A few remarks under each of these heads will, I think, establish this general assertion.

I. The Book of Prayer for the House of Prayer should most truly glorify God the Father.

Not an attribute of God is there overlooked, or obscured. He is there brought before us in the purity of his holiness, the grandeur of his perfections, and the wonders of his grace ; for the Prayer Book generally speaks of God in God's words, and if the Bible is a full-length portrait of a revealed Deity, drawn by the hands of men made skilful by the Holy Ghost ; the Prayer Book is that same portrait in miniature, preserving each distinct feature, the scale reduced, but the likeness the same.

With what profound reverence are we taught to approach God ! Mark the beginnings of all our prayers. There is no familiar chatting with Him, as with an equal ; not telling Him of the events of the day, as though He knew them not ; no preaching to Him with closed eyes, as if He were one of the congregation ; and no making his ear to tingle with the sounding brass of a brazen rhetoric, designed to draw out the admiring exclamation, What a beautiful ! or, What an eloquent prayer ! but on the contrary, all is solemn, humble, reverential, self-abasing, as it respects ourselves ; all is ennobling and glorifying, as it respects

God. Each prayer in that book is prayer, not an essay, not a section of a sermon, not hortatory to men instead of petitionary to God ; and the soul that truly enters into the spirit of these prayers is drawn almost within the overshadowing cloud of God's presence, and the place becomes to that worshipper, the house of prayer, the house of God, the gate of heaven. The first act of the worshipper in our courts, is to bow before God in silent prayer ; the first words which break the stillness of the church, are the words of God ; the first exhortation to the people, is to confess their sins before God ; and thus are we led along, through all the varied and sublime manifestation of God's attributes and grace, as seen in the absolution, the chants, the creed, the lessons, the prayer, the law, the gospel, and epistle, until, as at the commencement of our service, so at its close, the last words uttered by the minister are God's, the last act of the worshipper the bended knee of prayer to God.

II. The Book of Prayer for the House of Prayer should most truly glorify God the Son.

That our Liturgy does this, is obvious to every one who will read its pages. Of the two hundred prayers in the Book of Prayer, every one of them is offered, directly or indirectly, as our Lord has taught us to do, in his name. His own prayer, which He taught his disciples to pray, is introduced into each distinct service of our church. The Litany, after its opening cries for "mercy" to the several persons of the ever-blessed Trinity, continues its supplications in one unbroken

series of petitions to Jesus Christ, pleading with Him, by all the solemn events of his holy life, to deliver us "from every evil which the craft and subtilty of the devil or man worketh against us ;" besecching Him to hear us in all the requests which we make for peace and blessing, summing up the whole with an appeal to Him as the Son of God, and the Lamb of God, to hear us, and to "have mercy upon us ;" and this not once, nor twice, but with repeated supplications to Him, ending with the yearning cry of the minister, "Both now and ever, vouchsafe to hear us, O Christ," to which the hearts of the people respond, "Graciously hear us, O Christ ; graciously hear us, O Lord Christ."

The Christ-elevating character of our Liturgy is also seen in the prominence given to Him in the *construction* of its several services. Look at the order for the administration of the Lord's Supper, and see how every thing is designed to develop the doctrine of Christ's vicarious death and atoning sacrifice for sin. How, in the Confession do we plead, "for thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, forgive us all that is past." How does it bring to our ears "the comfortable words our Saviour Christ saith unto all who truly turn to Him !" How do its acts of consecration, oblation and invocation, cause the death and passion of Jesus to pass vividly before the soul ! How do the words which accompany the distribution of the elements tell of "Christ's body given for thee"—"Christ's blood shed for thee !" How does that prayer of thanksgiving assure the faithful participant "that we are very mem-

bers incorporate in the mystical body of Christ, which is the blessed company of all faithful people !” And how, when all stand up to sing the “Gloria in Excelsis,” does the Church labor to express its loving heart toward Jesus : “O Lord, the only begotten Son Jesus Christ ; O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us !” Not content with this one cry to Jesus, it again breaks forth, “Thou that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.” Still struggling to utter its emotions, it renews its cry, “Thou that takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer ;” then, as if gazing at Him as he sits at the right hand of the Majesty on High, the Church again appeals to Him—“Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us ;” and then, as if overawed by the glory into which it had penetrated, and covering its face in humility, it exclaims, in one burst of magnificent and soul-elevating ascription, “For thou only art holy ; thou only art the Lord ; thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father !”

So with the Baptismal service. It is Christ’s precious words, “Suffer little children to come unto Me,” which invite parents to bring their babes to Him ; it is Christ’s baptism in the river Jordan which “did sanctify water to the mystical washing away of sin ;” it is Christ’s promise, “Ask, and ye shall have ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you,” which is made the occasion of the earnest plea

of the second collect of that service ; it is Christ's words, "written by St. Mark," which constitutes the Divine part of the Baptismal contract ; it is Christ's cross which is marked upon the infant's forehead ; it is "into the congregation of Christ's flock," that the child is received ; it is "the faith of Christ crucified," that the baptized one promises not to be ashamed to confess ; it is "Christ's faithful soldier and servant," which he covenants to be "unto his life's end ;" and in the exhortation to the godfathers and godmothers, is summed up, in one compact sentence, the whole duty of our profession, "which is to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto Him."

I might thus analyze all the services, and Christ is in them all as the very core and kernel of each.

But particularly is the Christ-elevating character of the Book of Prayer seen, if we examine for a moment the *arrangement* of our services. Open the Prayer Book at the Calendar, and we see marked four Sundays in Advent. What mean these ? they are put there to tell us Christ is coming, and to prepare our hearts for his glorious advent. Then comes, "Christmas," to tell us Christ is born in Bethlehem ; then "Circumcision," to show us that Christ "was made under the law ;" then "Epiphany," to teach us how Christ was manifested to the Gentiles ; then "Ash-Wednesday," and the Lenten season, when the Church steadily contemplates her Lord, as he is about to be betrayed and given up into the hands of wicked men ; then the dark events of "Passion-Week" and "Good Friday," when

we stand under the dense shadow of one of the olive trees in Gethsemane, and see the agony of the Redeemer, or kneel beside his cross, that the great blood-drops of salvation may fall upon our hearts ; then the joyous shout of "Easter," the world's shout, "The Lord is Risen !"—then the glorious "Ascension," when Jesus Christ was exalted "with great triumph unto his kingdom in heaven."

Thus, year by year, the Church, in her Prayer Book, unrolls before her children, as in a panorama, the great events of our Lord's life, in their fulness, richness and variety. It is Christ coming, Christ living, Christ suffering, Christ dying, Christ rising, Christ ascending, Christ interceding, Christ coming again to judge the world, that is ever kept before the hearts of the people. Every service is full of Christ, He is glorified and praised on every page of the Book of Prayer.

III. The Book of Prayer for the House of Prayer should most truly glorify God the Holy Ghost.

The work and offices of this third person of the ever-blessed Trinity are stated and enforced with clearness and unction in the service. His grace is implored in the declaration of absolution ; his divinity is recognized in every "Gloria Patri," and in the opening sentences of the Litany ; one of his special offices is brought out in the "Te Deum ;" his "procession" is developed in the Nicene Creed ; in the Collects for "Quinquagesima" and Whitsunday and St. Barnabas, his work and offices are specifically stated. It is the blessing and sanctifying power of the "Word and

Holy Spirit" which is invoked in the prayer of consecration at the Holy Communion. It is to the Holy Spirit that the whole process of regeneration is referred in the office of Baptism. It is the seven-fold influences of the Comforter that are implored in the first prayer of the Confirmation service, and the special blessing invoked by the Bishop as he lays his hands upon the head of the kneeling candidate is, "that he may continue thine forever, and daily increase in thy Holy Spirit more and more until he come unto thine everlasting kingdom." In the form of Solemnization of Matrimony, "God the Holy Ghost" is especially called upon "to bless, preserve and keep" the newly married pair. In the office for the Burial of the Dead, it is the Spirit's voice which is quoted as giving authority to the sentence, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." The first question asked of the candidate for the Diaconate, as he presents himself before the Bishop, is, "Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this office and ministration?" Over the head of the kneeling candidate for the Priesthood is said by the Bishop and Ministers the solemn "Veni Creator Spiritus." And around the bended form of him who is to be advanced to the Episcopate is said, not only one of those hymns of the Ordinal which so peculiarly set forth the work and office of the Comforter, but when the hands of the Consecrators are laid upon his head, he is made a Bishop by the words, "Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Bishop in the church of

God, now committed to thee by the imposition of our hands."

A special day, "Whitsunday," is set apart, wherein to consider his peculiar work ; and another special day, "Trinity Sunday," wherein to study his Divinity ; and ever is this "Lord and Giver of Life" recognized, honored and glorified in the ritual of our holy worship.

IV. The Book of Prayer for the House of Prayer should most truly reflect the spirit and doctrines of the Bible.

We must worship God not only in spirit, but in truth. We cannot pray aright unless we are sound in the faith. The doctrines of the Bible are necessarily interwoven with our prayers. In a most striking manner does our Liturgy embody the doctrines of Divine truth. Not a doctrine necessary to salvation, that is not stated in some one of the collects, petitions or ascriptions of the Prayer Book.

How is the omniscience of God taught in the collect, "Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid," &c. How is the omnipresence of God taught in the collect, "O God, whose never-failing providence ordereth all things, both in heaven and earth," &c. How is the omnipotence of God declared in the collect, "O Almighty God, the Sovereign Commander of all the world, in whose hand is power and might which none is able to withstand." How is our "original or birth-sin" stated in the words of our morning and evening confession, "We have erred and strayed from thy ways

like lost sheep, we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, . . . and there is no health in us." How is our inability to recover ourselves from this lost condition shown in the collect, "O God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves," &c. How is the holiness of God declared in the "Trisagion," when "with Angels and Archangels, and all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify His glorious name." How is the necessity of the new birth expressed in the first exhortation in the Baptismal office—and so on through all the leading doctrines of grace; the Prayer Book expresses them mostly in the words of the Bible, always in its spirit. The commission under which Cranmer and his colleagues acted in compiling our Liturgy, required them "to consider and ponder the premises, and therefore having as well eye and respect to *the most sincere and pure Christian religion taught by the Scriptures*, as to the usages in the primitive church, should draw and make one convenient and meet order, rite and fashion of common and open prayers" &c. This they did so faithfully that, as Bishop Jeremy Taylor well says, "The Liturgy of the Church of England was, with great deliberation, compiled out of the Scriptures, the most of it; all the rest agrees with Scripture." With prayers thus instinct with the great truths of theology, the very marrow and fatness of the word of God; and with a theology turned into prayer, and working its way through our affections into our hearts and minds, we are eminently prepared to pray with the

spirit and with the understanding, and to worship God in the beauty of holiness, through that form of prayer which reflects so clearly and purely the doctrines and the spirit of the Bible.

V. The Book of Prayer for the House of Prayer should fully bear upward the devotions of the people.

Public prayer must necessarily be couched in general terms ; it is not expected that it should comprehend the wants and aspirations of the soul in all its individual relations to God, but only such of its emotions, confessions, penitence and joy, as it partakes of in common with the great congregation. God is to be worshipped in two ways—in public, and in private.

As individuals, holding personal relations to God, and Christ, and the Holy Ghost, we must have private and personal intercourse with God at the mercy seat ; that, in our closets, and having “shut to the door,” we may in secret give utterance to the deep inner desires of our souls ; open before Him who “seeth in secret” our trials, our struggles and our wants, and confess to no ear but his our private sins and shortcomings : and no one can be a true Christian who does not daily have this secret communion with God, through Jesus Christ. But in addition to this private prayer, we need public prayer. We are commanded “not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together ;” and in this public worship, we must have public prayers so framed as to avoid, on the one hand, personalities, and yet, on the other, cover the general and ordinary emotions of the assembled congregation. These de-

votions should consist of confession, penitence, implorations, ascription and thanksgiving. They should be sober, solemn, reverential, filial, scriptural—offered in faith, and presented in the name of the ever-living Intercessor. Such, emphatically, are the devotions of the Prayer Book. Framed mostly in Biblical language, they “smell of the myrrh, aloes and cassia” stored up in the ivory palaces of God’s word, out of which they were taken ; while the Litany, that marvellous collection of beseechings, and adjurations, and strong crying of the soul to Christ for mercy, is the alabaster box, very precious, which penitence brings each Lord’s day, and breaks and pours upon the head and feet of Jesus, until the whole House of Prayer is filled with the odor of the ointment.

There may be formality in our church—alas ! there is—but only in hearts unattuned to the spiritual breathings of the Prayer Book. There may be deadness in our members—alas ! there is—but only in souls which are not quickened by the Holy Ghost ; for when the worshipper enters these courts, prepared by the Holy Ghost as the spirit of grace and supplication, to bow before God, and prays the words which the Church puts into his lips—now of confession, now of repentance, now of hope, now of faith, now of publican-like abasement, and now of exulting joy—then does he engage in a worship more fitted, I confidently affirm, than any other on earth, to inspire true devotion. The fulness, the manifoldness, and the befittingness of the prayers of our Book of Prayer can only be known by

those who frequent our service and breathe out their public prayers through this hallowed ritual. The testimony of those who have never joined in this service as to its being cold, formal, unaffecting, is worthless, because they have never entered into the spirit of the service. But there rises before us a "great cloud of witnesses," following each other in a procession which occupies centuries in passing—a procession, made up of confessors, and martyrs, and bishops, and priests, and deacons, and kings, and nobles, and subjects, and learned, and ignorant, and poor—a procession, gathered out of every nation, and tongue, and people ; and each, as he passes, gives his loud, clear and touching testimony to the fervor, excellency, spirituality and soul-elevating character of the Liturgy of our own and the mother Church of England.

VI. The Book of Prayer for the House of Prayer, should be a proper vehicle of the praises of the people.

David represents God as "inhabiting the praises of Israel." What a sublime thought ! God is said to dwell in light ; that is, it centres in Him and radiates from him. God is said to inhabit eternity ; that is, time past, time present, time to come, is an ever-present now with God. And so He is said to inhabit the praises of Israel ; that is, He is at once the theme and the source of all the praises of his people. He never moves away from them—never hushes them—never tires of them ; they ever fill his ear, ever float around his throne ; and as heaven is all light, so that they need not the sun or the moon to lighten it, because

He who dwelleth in light is there ; and as heaven has an eternity of bliss, because He who inhabiteth eternity is there ; so it is full of praise, because the Holy One who inhabiteth the praises of Israel is there.

Praise is the most elevating part of worship. Prayer prepares for praise. We cannot praise God unless prayer has first tuned the strings, and given the key-note to the heart ;—but when the heart thus attuned, is struck by the hand of praise, then will its chords respond with heavenly melodies ; its gushing feelings will leap forth in bounding joy ; and its high notes of gladness, as well as its softest tones of submission, will delight the ear of Him who inhabiteth the praises of Israel.

Those who have not examined the subject will be surprised to find how essential an element of worship Praise is, and how much it is intermingled with the experience and services of God's people in all ages of His church. There is scarcely a great event in the religious history of the world, that is not marked with exhibitions of Praise. When God “laid the foundations of the earth,” “the morning stars sang together, and all sons of God shouted for joy.”

When the Israelites passed out of Egypt, beheld the destruction of their enemies, and were “baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea”—the great national baptism which constituted them a national church—they celebrated the event with one of the most magnificent acts of praise the world has ever heard. Six hundred thousand men, with Moses at their head, and

tens of thousands of women, with timbrels and harps, led by Miriam, sung in responsive strains that song which told of their deliverance, and which opened with the triumphant shout, "I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously ; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea." What lofty stanzas ! What recitative strains ! What thrilling antiphon ! What a swelling chorus ! The scene, the song, the sound, combine to make it one of the sublimest acts of praise in the annals of the world.

When David brought up the ark of the Lord from the house of Obed-edom to the tent which he had pitched for it in Jerusalem, it is recorded, "thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the Lord, with shouting and with sound of the cornet, and with trumpet, and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps." But that which emphatically distinguishes this day and scene from others in the Jewish calendar, is the fact that then was given to the church the first of those Psalms which the sweet singer of Israel wrote to the praise and glory of God. That was the birth day of our Divine Psalter ; its infant voice was first heard as Asaph, and his brethren, circling about the tent which contained the ark, sung with the accompaniment of harps, and cymbals, and trumpets, and cornets, the psalm which the king had written and recorded in the sixteenth chapter of the First Book of Chronicles, and the 105th Psalm of David. The royal Psalmist, with a musician's ear, a poet's imagination, and a sanctified heart, made Poetry

and its twin-sister Music integral elements of worship ; his glorious odes were set to notes by the several masters of song ; psalm followed psalm, until there was given to the church of God a body of lyric poetry, which for depth of emotion, loftiness of praise, breadth of meaning, and length of use, can never be excelled.

When Solomon consecrated the temple which he had built for God, a consecration scene the like of which the world has never since beheld, he incorporated into the gorgeous ritual for that day the service of song. And it is a remarkable fact, that it was not until the singers had praised the Lord, that the Lord descended in the visible symbol of his presence, and filled the house with his glory ; for, says the sacred narrative, "it came even to pass as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals, and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, For He is good, for his mercy endureth forever : that *then* the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord ; so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud : for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God."

When God would make known to the shepherds the news of the birth of Christ, he sends a multitude of the heavenly host to sing the birth hymn of the Saviour above the plains of Bethlehem. Hark !

"What sudden blaze of song spreads o'er the expanse of heaven,
In waves of light it thrills along, the angelic signal given;
Glory to God from yonder central fire,
Flows out the echoing lay beyond the starry quire."

And most fit it was, that the birth hour of the Christian dispensation, like the birth-hour of creation, and the birth-hour of the Israelitish church, and the birth-hour of the temple service, should be ushered in by songs, such as please the ear of God.

When Christ instituted the memorials of his death, He taught his church ever to link praise with that holy sacrament, by singing with his disciples a hymn before He rose from the table, and went out with them to the garden of Gethsemane; and not to pause on the many other instances furnished in the Bible, when the exile of Patmos, before whose eye passed the visions of heavenly glory, would describe to us the worship in that temple not made with hands, he groups upon the sea of glass spread out before the throne, the congregated hosts of heaven; he puts into their hands harps of gold; he fills their mouths with a new song, and he draws out and cumulates the sound of the voices of ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, as "the voice of a great multitude, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings," until the volume of melody rising from angels and saints, like the cloud of glory in the earthly temple, fills the courts of the Lord, and God in very truth inhabits the praises of his spiritual Israel.

With such teaching from God's word, we say no

public worship is acceptable to him, in which the element of praise does not largely enter. Most happily and fully is it incorporated with our service. It is the most spiritually jubilant worship on earth. It repeats the praises of the Bible more truthfully and fully than any other formulary, and lifts up the heart of the worshippers now with the "*Venite, exultemus Domino*," or the "*Bonum est confiteri*;" now with the "*Te Deum*" or the "*Benedicite*;" now with the song of Zacharias or the "*Deus Misereatur*" of David; now with the psalter of the sweet singer of Israel; and now with the hymns of the sweet poets of later days; and now it ventures to imitate the angels, and sing on earth the song of glory which they taught the church to sing, when they chanted from the skies the "*Gloria in excelsis Deo*."

While the element of praise exists in full in our Service Book, it must with pain be confessed, that our congregations do not make it prominent enough in actual use. The congregations, as congregations, do not unite as they should in singing and making melody in their hearts unto the Lord. They devolve too much upon a choir the duty which belongs to all the people. They stand or sit as listeners to a song of praise, sung it may be, with skill and power, but they do not join in the strain, and make the chant the vehicle of their souls' thanksgiving. The exhortation of God's word is, "*Let all the people praise Thee, O Lord*;" yet most of "the people" are culpably silent, sometimes because of the too fanciful, complicated and improper music of

the organist, but often because their hearts are not tuned to the praises of God.

When you consider how the Scriptures call upon us, by precept and example, to employ songs and chants in Divine worship; when you reflect what anthems and psalms the Church furnishes in her Service Book for the use of the great congregation, incorporating into her ritual not merely a few songs of David, but the whole book of Psalms; those Psalms of which Athanasius said, that they were a "mirror of the soul of every one who sings them;" those Psalms of which Ambrose said, "The Psalter deserves to be called the praise of God, the glory of man, the voice of the church;" those Psalms in which Augustine tells us in his Confessions, that "he conversed with God;" those Psalms of which Luther says, that through them "you look right into the heart of the saints as into fair and pleasant gardens, or heaven itself, and behold beautiful, laughing and delicate flowers of all manner of fair and joyous thoughts toward God, and his love springing lustily into life;" those Psalms of which Calvin says, "Not without good grounds am I wont to call this book an anatomy of all parts of the soul, since no one can experience emotions whose portrait he could not behold reflected in its mirror;" those Psalms of which Bishop Mant says, that "like the paradise of Eden, they afford us in perfection, though in minature, everything that groweth elsewhere, 'every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, and above all, what was there lost but is here restored, the tree of life in

the midst of the garden ;” when we have such materials of praise, in such rich abundance, should not the worship of our church be more instinct with praise and thanksgiving ; should we not “make a joyful noise before the Lord ;” should we not obey the injunction of the Apostle, “offer the sacrifice of praise continually, that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name ?”

Lastly : the Book of Prayer for the House of Prayer should give us liturgical alliance with the Holy Catholic Church, in all places and in all ages.

As each congregation should worship God as the heart of one man, when it makes its united confession, offers its united prayers, sings its united praise, recites its united creed, so should “the blessed company of all faithful people,” professing “one Lord, one faith, one baptism,” be united in heart and tongue in one Liturgy—so flexible indeed, as to accommodate itself to the varying changes and conditions of the church’s outward life, yet so fixed and catholic in its fundamentals of worship that every true child of God should find in it the exponent of his faith and worship, and should delight thus to ally himself, through the holy relationship of a common Liturgy, with the Christians of all lands and in all ages. One, in the brotherhood of a common paternity—God ; one, in the blood relationship of a common elder brother—Christ ; one, in the brotherhood of the new birth of the Holy Ghost ; one, in the brotherhood of a common rule of faith—the Holy Scripture ; so should we be one in the

brotherhood of a common Liturgy, lifting up the heart in one spirit of prayer, one song of praise, one confession of faith, until we feel that the Saviour's prayer, "That they all may be one," has been answered, and we come, as the common members of Christ's mystical body, "in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

We have something of this unity in the almost common Liturgy of our own and the mother Church of England ; and who that has worshipped in the churches of Great Britain—who that has sought out on the continent the chapel of an English embassy—who that has wandered farther east, and, amidst Mohammedan mosques, or Hindoo temples, or Chinese pagodas, has found a House of Prayer, and the service of our Book of Prayer—the service of his home and of his heart—that has not blessed God for this unity of worship, by which, though on the ocean wave, though in a foreign church, though a pilgrim in the land of the sun-rising, though afar off amidst the isles of the Pacific, he could yet worship God in the same prayers, the same praise, the same sacramental offices, which engage the hearts and the voices of the loved ones at home, and by which the Christians of the great Anglo-Saxon family are enabled to keep so much of "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." If I may be permitted for one moment, with great diffidence, to allude to myself, I can give my testimony to the truth which I have just asserted. I have joined in the service of our Prayer

Book in South America, in Polynesia, in China, in Egypt, on Mt. Zion in Jerusalem, in Greece, in various countries in Europe, in each of the four quarters of the globe, and can testify to the sweetness of the thought that we could, on the same days, bow with our fellow Christians of the Protestant Episcopal Church of England and America before a common mercy seat, using the words of a common Liturgy, though separated by mountains, oceans, continents and a hemisphere.

But the Liturgy of a House of Prayer should do something more than furnish a common bond of union among living Christians ; it should unite us with the church in all past ages of its existence.

The church militant is now just what it was when first founded by Christ—his mystical body. The members have changed, but its foundations have not changed—its sacraments have not changed—its doctrines have not changed—its rule of faith has not changed—its glorious Head has not changed. Our Liturgy, therefore, should repeat to us the great themes and modes of worship used in apostolic and primitive times, that we may trace liturgic, as well as ministerial, lineage with the church in its first and purest age. All the Liturgies of the world can be traced back to the Liturgy of St. James, entitled the Great Oriental Liturgy ; the Liturgy of St. Mark, or the Patriarchate of Alexandria ; the Roman, which can be traced back nearly to the apostolic age, and the Gallican, or that used by the churches in Gaul, and traditionally ascribed in its leading features to Irenæus

and Polycarp, the disciple of St. John. These are the four original trunks from which have branched forth the various Liturgies of the eastern and western world. Many have regarded these as distinct and independent : distinct they are, but not independent ; distinct like the four rivers which Moses describes as going forth out of Eden, one compassing the whole land of Havilah, one surrounding the whole land of Ethiopia, one going toward Assyria, and one watering the plain of Mesopotamia, but each finding its head in one river that took its rise in Eden, and each rolling outward water from the same well-spring of Paradise.

So these four great streams of liturgic worship, one compassing the Patriarchate of Antioch, which extended from the Euphrates to the Hellespont ; one surrounding the churches of Egypt, Ethiopia and Abyssinia ; one going toward Italy and northern Africa ; and one watering the martyr-founded churches of Gaul ; may each be traced backward to one head-spring, the Apostolic Church, when that church, still bedewed with its pentecostal baptism, "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers." With these ancient Liturgies, ours has substantial unity. All that they borrowed from Scripture we have in common with them ; and of that which is human and uninspired, the prayers, the hymns, the rites and ceremonies, we have retained and copied into our service whatever is most agreeable to Scripture and to Apostolic usage. The prayers which the church has offered for fourteen

hundred years ; the praises which she has sung for a whole millennium ; the rites which she has used for nearly forty generations of Christians ; are the prayers and praises and rites which form the basis of our service, and which unite us in liturgical links with the purest and earliest worship of the church of Christ. What a communion of Saints does this enable us to enjoy with the glorious company of the Apostles, the goodly fellowship of the Prophets, the noble army of Martyrs, and the Holy Church throughout the world, as it enters into God's house with thanksgiving, and into his courts with prayer and praise !

Millions of hearts have breathed these prayers ; millions of tongues have sung these songs ; and fitted as they are for all classes of men, all climes of earth, and all ages of the world, they bear upon them a stamp of universality, akin to that which God has impressed upon his holy word, and in using this Book of Prayer in the House of Prayer, the worshipper is liturgically allied to the Holy Catholic Church in each age of its existence.

Brethren, we have much to be grateful to God for, that we have such a biblical, holy, ancient, befitting and Christ-elevating Liturgy. There is observable in the Christian world outside of our communion, a yearning after liturgical worship, and many efforts have been made to supply the defect. Service-books have been prepared by ministers of different denominations, and treatises have been written by Presbyterians, Lutherans, Independents, Socinians and others, to prove that liturgic worship is consonant with the Bible, with the

custom of the early church, with the proprieties of public worship, and with the needs of the popular heart. Mark the following emphatic language by a clergyman of the Presbyterian church, in a work entitled "Eutaxia, or Presbyterian Liturgies:" "Example, we have seen, abundantly warrants the use of liturgical forms in the Presbyterian church. History gives forth but one utterance on the subject. Wherever Protestant communions have been established the institution of worship has been secured by formularies, in whose production the most able minds to be enlisted have been employed. The Calvinistic churches constitute no exception to this general rule. Those primitive Christians of the Alpine valleys, the Waldenses, from time immemorial possessed and used a liturgical form. The Genevan church was early formed with a correct and well conceived order of worship; and that order was adopted in succession by all the national Presbyterian churches of kindred faith and discipline. France, Scotland, Switzerland, Holland, Hungary, western Germany, almost at the same period embraced this mode of worship. It was long before even the Independents of England relinquished its use. To this day Great Britain and America offer the sole instances of Calvinistic churches without a Liturgy."

Such quotations we could multiply a hundred fold from earnest-minded, close-thinking and godly men in all the religious denominations of the world. We state but a fact when we say, that there are leading minds in every body of Christian worshippers in favor of a

precomposed form or directory of public worship. And many of them have left on record their regrets at not having such a service, and their desire that such should be framed. Indeed many have been framed, but as none of them struck down their roots into the old Eastern Liturgies, that they might draw up thence the life-sap which is circulated in their apostolic forms, they all withered, and not one of them now remains in its original integrity.

Calvin attempted it in 1553, in his Liturgy drawn up for the Reformed church of Geneva, and failed ; John Knox attempted it in 1554, in his "Book of Common Order" for the church of Scotland, and failed ; Richard Baxter attempted it in his Non-conformist Liturgy, and failed ; John Wesley attempted it in his "Sunday Service for the Methodists," and failed. But that Liturgy which Martyr-Bishops three hundred years ago, compiled out of the Holy Scriptures and primitive rituals, which was compacted and fashioned by the very men who gave to the world King James' Bible, has stood the battering-ram of Romanism and Puritanism ; the sappings and minings of Socinians and Infidels, the treacherous blows of men who have eaten the bread of the church, and then lifted up their heels against her, and has given to the English church a steadfastness of faith, a purity of doctrine, a grandeur of worship, and a moral power possessed by no other church in the whole world.

This Book of Prayer transmitted to us, and adapted to our American church, improved in structure and ar-

rangement, is the great liturgic heritage which we are to keep in full use in our House of Prayer, and transmit unimpaired to our children's children as the noblest form of worship compiled by human minds, and the most fitting Book of Prayer for the House of Prayer.

There are those who are almost afraid to eulogize the Prayer Book lest they should be thought to foster formalism, or be regarded as formalists. With such I have no sympathy. Next to my Bible, I love my Prayer Book, and I hesitate not to proclaim its excellency and advocate its use. Nay more, I will say that the more the minds of the members of our church are fashioned by its prayers and its praises; the more they imbibe its devotional and eucharistic spirit; the more the Prayer Book lives its life, and breathes its breath into our souls, the holier shall we be, and the more glorious will the church appear.

Yet I would not overrate the Prayer Book. It does not overrate itself; it is subordinate to the Bible, and there is its proper place. If an Astronomer, after spending many days in lecturing upon the nature and influence of the Sun, should devote one lecture to the Moon, would it be regarded as disparaging the sun? Especially if he should show that but for the sun the moon would not shine or do her office!

Such is my position now. Every Lord's day do I preach about the Sun, the glorious Sun of Righteousness, the central orb of the moral universe, binding all churches to Him—lighting all churches with His

beams—and by the sweet attractions of His love, causing them all to roll around Him, and make music as they roll. To-night, however, I come to speak of a distant satellite. I do not even propose to speak of the Church, which like the earth, moves in a stately orbit around this Sun, but of the Prayer Book, that Moon which moves around the church. Like the moon, the Prayer Book is only a satellite of the church. Like the moon, it borrows all its light from the Sun of Righteousness—like the moon, it always turns its bright face to the church—like the moon, it creates the great tidal waves of prayer and praise—like the moon, it shines only in the night of the church's earthly being, and like the moon, it follows the church, as the church marches through the signs of her ecclesiastical zodiac, around the central orb of life and glory, even Jesus Christ.

Such is the position of the Prayer Book in the Protestant Episcopal Church. It is not the greater light to rule the day, but the lesser light to shine upon our night of ignorance and infirmity ; and to guide our feet along that pathway of prayer and praise, which shineth more and more until the perfect day—the perfect day of Heaven.

Sermons on the Liturgy.

SERMON IX.

SAMENESS OF WORDS NO HINDRANCE TO DEVOTION.

T. W. COIT, D. D.

MATTHEW XXVI. 44.: And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

WHAT our Lord did on the eve of his passion, in one of the most critical and affecting moments of his earthly history, our Church deems it proper to do often—nay, habitually. She prays, day after day, “saying the same words.” And such an example, one would think, is high enough to authorize such a practice, so long as the Church shall bear Christ’s holy and blessed name.

But, singular as it may look to an impartial eye, this practice has been objected to as one of our saddest defects. Multitudes, in our times, have grown weary of sameness in food for the mind, as the Israelites once grew weary of sameness in food for the body; and have said with those ancient utilitarians and lovers of variety, “our soul is dried away; there is nothing at

all but this manna before our eyes.”* They have insisted, that this saying the same words in our prayers begets insipidity, dryness and dullness—that religious somnolency overspreads our devotions, and makes us drowsy and torpid formalists. Nay—they have even pretended that we convert our very forms into merits or charms, and fondly imagine that the bare repetition of them is a virtue, and will be accounted righteousness in heaven.

It will be perceived that I have stated the character of that opposition which our liturgy has experienced, in the *past* tense, rather than in the *present*. And I do so, most cheerfully ; for the temper of non-episcopal communities seems, latterly, to have undergone a change, which awhile since would have been accounted almost miraculous. Why, I myself can well remember the day, when in a public speech, and in a monthly journal, our religion, as embodied in our Prayer Book, was called, literally, “the devil’s edition of Christianity.” Now, in the same quarters from which this dire onslaught came, liturgies, and liturgies resembling our own, are talked of as more than possible, as highly desirable. This is an auspicious omen of the times ; and I would improve it by calling attention, in my own neighborhood, to some considerations which go especially to show, that the use of a liturgy is compatible with the devoutest piety, and even promotes it.

My position accordingly is, that saying the same

* Numbers xi. 6.

words in prayer is not unfavorable to piety, whether we consider the claims of human nature, the history of our religion, or the experience of the eminently devout. And further, that the objection which condemns such a practice is founded on a mistake of the great object of public prayer ; and is substantially as much an objection to extempore services as to a liturgy.

I. It is not true in reference to human nature, that saying the same words hinders devotion.

Faultfinders with liturgies have insensibly adopted the unfortunate mistake, that prayer is an exercise for the head rather than for the heart, and must therefore exhibit incessant variety. They would tell me in a moment I misunderstood them, for the chief reason why they disapprove of liturgy is, that it is not calculated to move the heart ; which they grant, (indeed, maintain) is the principal or only thing to be exercised in prayer. But my position will, notwithstanding, be adhered to. For I hold it to be most demonstrable, that if the heart be the principal thing to be employed or moved in prayer, then they have missed their aim in preferring extempore devotions. And the simple reason is this. It is not true, as a fact in the history of human nature, that the heart covets or loves that variety, which is presumed to be indispensable to fervent worship. The heart, the affections, love unchangeable things, love old things, love things which endure like the hills of earth and the stars of heaven. It is a striking fact, by the way, that the Bible itself compares the righteous to fixed, and the unrighteous

to wandering stars.* It is the head, the intellect, the reason, the imagination, which love new ideas, perpetually revolving and unfolding forms of truth. And the fact, though one about which metaphysical philosophers might speculate, and argue, and entertain us, is none the less an open fact, and one which can be put within the reach of a humble and unlearned mind ; as I now propose and hope to show. Before doing which, however, let me make the passing remark, that few understand the deep philosophy, as well as benevolence of our Church, in her provisions for the service of God's house : in the chancel, she gives the heart what it loves—sameness ; in the pulpit, she gives the head what it delights in—variety ; thus providing for all the wants of our craving and exacting nature.

But to proceed with the argument. About what, brethren, do your affections cluster more fondly or tenaciously, in most cases, than your homes—the places where you or your children were born—where you have walked and sported and worshipped together, and where the dead of your fathers lie, and you may lie down beside them ? And now tell me, Would you change your homes yearly or oftener ? would you change them at all ? familiar as they and all about them are, do you grow weary of them for their sameness ? O no, you declare, by no means. But if not, why not ? If we must never use the same words to God, from day to day, because sameness palls and tires

* Dan. xii. 3. Jude 13.

the heart, why must we not have a new church, or a new bible, or a new minister, or a new church-yard, or a new home, which may give us all of them by sending us among a new sect, that will furnish all ready made to our hands—our only cost a journey? If the logic is good for prayers, it is just as good for all that goes with prayer—religious truth, and the outward adjuncts of it, a church, a ministry, modes of worship, and a possession of a burying place, where we may bury our dead out of our sight.*

But, though you may never have reasoned yourselves into the *whys* and *wherefores* of your attachment to the sameness of home, the sameness of a Bible, a house of worship, or a burial-place for your dead, you can perceive in a moment I am right when I say such sameness never fatigues, nay, cherishes and invigorates your affections, rather than wears them out. And the simple but true explanation is, that your affections, and your affections principally, or only, are interested in such things; and the affections like not that which shifts and wavers, but that which is invariable and steady. I have referred you to one of the most familiar, and, at the same time, one of your most valuable possessions to illustrate this—your homes. You may apply what I confidently avow as a principle in our constitutions, to any other things in which the heart is deeply interested, and you will attest its correctness still. Who ever gets tired of those things which

* Gen. xxiii. 4.

represent his country's sovereignty, or awake the inspirations of its patriotism? Who ever wants to see the stars and stripes of the national banner obliterated, or the tune which every American ear knows from childhood, (poor music though it be in a critic's view,) relinquished for an air of wider variety and richer melody? No one, you say, but an almost traitor. But why should it be so healthful to one of the profound sentiments of the heart, (attachment to a native land,) to have the forms in which that land's sovereignty or patriotic spirit shall express themselves, *unchangeable*; and so unhealthful to another profound sentiment of the heart, (attachment to a God,) that the forms in which this attachment shall be expressed be unchangeable also? My brethren it is false in philosophy to suppose this necessary, and equally false in fact. Men can love and be moved by forms in religion as well as by forms in patriotism and forms in domestic life. It is just as reasonable to suppose, and might be proved just as reasonable in reality, that men should love a national liturgy, as well as national banner, or a national tune. They would love such a liturgy infinitely more, than an ever changeful mode of worship, their pious feelings be more stirred by it, and far better sustained.

Is this questioned? We appeal to our own experience, within the circle to which it extends—our own communion. Have we grown tired of our liturgy the more we have used it? I say *used* it; for lookers-on may grow tired of it; and they who complain of it (be it remembered) are lookers-on, for they are stran-

gers, and have not tested its influence practically. The more we have used it—made it literally what it is called, Common Prayer, not the prayer of the minister, but of all in common—the more we have *thus* used it, have we the more grown wearied with it? I could stake my integrity upon the assertion, that not a devout churchman who ever lived would answer yea. On the contrary, the perpetual reply of all who have used our prayers, as they ought to be used, though not educated in the love of them, has ever been, “The more these prayers are on our lips, the more our hearts delight in them—they grow upon us by practice, we find them ever fresh and enlivening.”*

It ought to be so, brethren, from what we know of the history of the affections, in relation to other matters in which they are deeply interested. It would be strange, mysterious, contradictory, if the affections had one law of attachment for one class of subjects, and another law for another. They have not. They who framed liturgies knew they had not, and they provided for human nature, according to its own requirements, when they taught men to worship God, not in words perpetually new, but as our Saviour did, in an hour when none ever felt more profoundly, “saying the same words.” Liturgies then, (unnatural as too many account them,) are more natural, far more so, than prayers which are as changeable as the wind. They

* “As long as I had no prejudices against it [the Prayer Book], I had no stop in my devotions from any of its imperfections.” *Baxter: in Quarterly Review*, xxv. 289.

are as natural as old psalms, or old hymns, (or old tunes for both,) and how natural these become the history of the Kirk of Scotland, where so many complaints of old prayers have been engendered, may appositely tell. The version of the Psalms, used by this Christian body, is as uncouth as that of Sternhold and Hopkins ; but the Kirk itself might be remoulded, as easily as that version be done away with. And as to old tunes, let the eloquent language of a Scotch reviewer speak for itself, in their eulogy. "There is to us," he says, "more of touching pathos, heart-thrilling expression, in some of the old psalm tunes, feelingly displayed, than in a whole batch of modernisms. The strains go home, 'and the fountains of the great deep are broken up'—the great deep of unfathomable feeling that lies far, far below the surface of the world-hardened heart ; and as the unwonted yet unchecked tear starts in the eye, the softened spirit yields to their influence, and shakes off the load of earthly care, rising purified and spiritualized into a clearer atmosphere. Strange, inexplicable associations brood over the mind, 'like the far off dreams of Paradise,' mingling their chaste melancholy with musings of a still subdued, though more cheerful character. How many glad hearts in the olden time have rejoiced in these songs of praise—how many sorrowful ones sighed out their complaints in those plaintive notes, that steal sadly yet sweetly on the ear—hearts that now cold in death are laid to rest around that sacred fane,

within whose walls they had so often swelled with emotion !”*

Now, how is it, and why is it, that such unconquerable love of old psalms and old tunes is so natural, and so appropriate, and so enlivening and undying, and yet that there can be no such love when prayer is its object, no such love kept alive and glowing by old forms of devotion ? O my brethren, it is absurd to imagine that what is true of the human heart, in relation to one class of its objects of attachment, will not be true of all. We aver it to be so by our individual experience. And who shall gainsay us ? shall they who have never tried a liturgy as we have ? they who have only been listeners of it, and not joiners in it ; and that too when a liturgy was never meant to be looked at, but to be united in, and when of course it must appear to disadvantage if so contemplated ? We protest against judgment by such parties. They are not only prejudiced beforehand, but they have never made the experiment which would qualify them to adjudicate on such a matter. Prayer is not a thing to be speculated about by a mere observer. It is a thing to be tested by inward sensations. It is the tune of the heart, if one may say so—the voice of the soul crying to its God ; and the same sounds on the ear can help its aspirations towards heaven, as easily as sameness in other sounds can awake the love of home or the love of country. Let one far from his domestic fireside, or far from his

* Blackwood, quoted in “The Churchman” of April 27, 1844.

native land, hear those sounds which bring up the memory of both, and how his heart burns within him with kindling recollections ! And why then, away from heaven, should not our hearts burn, as we use words which we have been taught to use from infancy, as guiding us to heaven ; which many most dear to us, but now in paradise, have used before us—some of which, indeed, they may use now and forever in their anthems of praise ? They do, if we will make such words our own—speak them with our tongues ; and, better still, respond to them with our feelings. Our hearts will soon delight in them ; and, then, reacting upon one another, the words will prompt the heart afresh, and the heart will love the words the more, till those words will be the surest quickeners of its devotion, and the most choice of all vehicles by which its aspirations may be wafted to the throne of God. We who have tried it give this as our experience. Let those who doubt lay prejudice aside, and make our liturgy their own, and we have no fears of the well-proved issue.

II. It is not true of our religion, that it condemns sameness of language in the expression of religious feeling.

But it is vehemently asserted that it is because our Saviour condemns repetitions in prayer. This is quite as serious an error in fact, as the error under the former head was in philosophy. Our Saviour did not condemn repetitions, but “vain repetitions.”* A qualifying

* Matt. vi. 7.

word is sometimes of immense importance. One would suppose, from his bare language, in that same Sermon upon the Mount, where he condemns vain repetitions, that he also condemns all care for the morrow.* Yet his language, examined critically in the original, shows satisfactorily, that he means not to encourage recklessness or indifference, but to check greedy or over-anxious solicitude. So here, he condemns not repetitions, but vain repetitions, unmeaning repetitions, repetitions which have no deep feeling to back them, or which expect a hearing, as the Pharisees did, and as ignorant Papists now do, for repetition's sake. Such repetitions were those of Baal's priests, who shouted "from morning even until noon, O Baal, hear us ;"† and those of many other pagans, as well as those of one or more of the Jewish sects.

Repetitions are not condemned by the wholesale in the Bible. If they were, we should not find them in the Bible itself. But we do find them there, in the very midst of devotional language, the most fervent devotional language which the Bible supplies—the Book of Psalms. In the 136th Psalm, *e. g.*, the phrase, "for his mercy endureth forever," occurs six and twenty times ; in fact, in every verse the Psalm contains. The phrase, "We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord," which has often been censured as a wretched repetition in our Litany occurs but sixteen times ; not so many by ten. And what is remarkable,

* Matt. vi. 34.

† 1 Kings xviii. 26.

the phrases in both cases are responses—the words “for his mercy endureth forever,” being no doubt used as a chorus or response to the preceding part of the verse ; just as “We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord” is an answer to the minister ; he beginning and the people concluding every litanical petition.*

This 136th Psalm, by the way—fuller of sameness than the Litany—is that memorable one which the great confessor Athanasius and his congregation repeated together in church at midnight, when they were surrounded by armed foes, and threatened with instant death for their steadfast adherence to the doctrine of the Trinity.† They pronounced it, as we do, responsively ; and that, too, almost exactly 1500 years ago,‡ so that responsive worship is no new thing in the Church, and no new thing with those who have jeopardised their very lives for doctrines, which we believe most important and most true.

To proceed.—There is a wonderful sameness in the longest of the Psalms, the 119th ; and yet this is the Psalm which is thought more illustrative, perhaps, of deep and thorough religious experience, than any of the whole one hundred and fifty. Indeed there is a vein of sameness running through all the Psalms, which proves two things, (both of which contribute to our argument,) to be undeniable. One is, that piety, even when inspired, loves not that variety which is pretend-

* The repetition of an “Amen” would have been especially condemned had not the Bible expressly sanctioned it. Ps. xli. 13 ; lxxxix. 52.

† Cave's Lives, 8vo ed. ii. 286.

‡ A. D. 356.

ed to be so necessary to piety ; for if it did, we should see far greater variety than we do. Another is, that Inspiration did not think variety so necessary to devotion ; for if it were, it would, as it might have done with infinite ease have provided for it more abundantly. But, as if to demonstrate that devotion neither loves nor requires that variety which is contended for by the adversaries of a liturgy, the Bible, the Bible itself, gives us but one strictly devotional book, made up in general of very short forms ; and as if those forms were enough for all ages, it is all of devotional composition which it gives us for two dispensations. There is but one Book of Psalms for Gentile and for Jew. The New Testament has but a few scattered forms of devotional composition, and these almost the shortest possible. When the disciples of Christ came to him for such forms, he did not give them a book full, he gave them a solitary one ; and that so brief, that while Christ himself was satisfied with it, not a denomination of Christians under the sun, perhaps, would be content with that and that alone.*

But it is affirmed, the Lord's Prayer is but a model. This is not true ; for St. Luke commands it to be said as a form. His language is, " When ye pray, say ;"† as explicit and imperative as a rubric. But granting

* One of the old standard objections to the use of the Lord's Prayer was that Christ " made it in his minority before he was arrived at his full perfection."—*Fuller's Triple Reconciler*, p. 130, edit. 1654.

† Luke xi. 2.

the affirmation to be correct, nothing is clearer than that the Lord's Prayer encourages sameness ; for it is but *one* model, and not a hundred ; and it is but one model for every day, since the language of the prayer itself, "give us this day our daily bread," shows that it was intended (whether as a form or model only), for our daily guide.

No where, however, has our Lord countenanced the idea, that sameness of language is no hindrance to devotion, more signally than in the case selected as a text. Never were his necessities more pressing, never were his feelings more deeply wrought upon, than when the language the text alludes to, fell from his sacred lips. And he was one, who might have called at will from the entire vocabulary of a language, for new forms of thought and expression, had he wanted them ; since never man (his enemies themselves attesting it), whether orator, poet, or saint, spake as he spake.* But no. With a universe of words (if I may say so) at his command, and the fate of a universe hanging on his action, he prays again, and again, and again ; but his language is invariably the same. And never did Christ more faithfully exhibit his entire humanity, or the entire naturalness of his feelings, than in doing so. For feeling, and the fountain of feeling, the heart, want not (as has been maintained) the variety which some appear to prize so highly ; and when moved most, they want it least. It is insincerity, policy, manœuvring,

* John vii. 46.

and hypocrisy, which try to make up in words what they want in sensibility : it is these which are most voluble, most changeful in their language, and which strive, by ringing changes on words, to deafen common sense. Put men in jeopardy, where the strongest sentiment of our nature, love of life, comes into immediate action, and see how few and simple the words they utter. The disciples, when almost drowning, do but cry, "Lord save us ; we perish."* But put men where they act the part of a wheedler, or an importuner, and their words are endless in number and in changes. Observe *e. g.* the circumlocutory, cajoling address of Tertullus, (absolutely apologizing for its own prolixity,)+ when he wished the Roman Governor to issue sentence against St. Paul. Or, if you prefer a prayer to illustrate the point, (as prayer is the subject of discussion,) turn to the two prayers of the Publican and the Pharisee.‡ The Publican's is shorter than our shortest prayers, the collects, so often complained of for their brevity. "God be merciful to me a sinner," is all he says ; and, as the language fairly intimates, says again and again, while he is smiting his breast for anguish. But the Pharisee has the same roundabout way of getting at his subject, which characterized the orator before Felix. He absolutely tells the Deity a tale ; as, (profane though it be,) I have heard many a professed Christian do, in modern extempore devotions. Not that I speak of such Christians as Pharisees or

* Matt. viii. 25.

† Acts xxiv. 4.

‡ Luke xvii. 10.

hypocrites. God forbid I should impeach their sincerity ; but though they have done it thoughtlessly or in ignorance, they have done actually as the Pharisee did, held a sort of conversation with the Almighty, and told him a story.

But this subject cannot be examined at large, or the Bible might be quoted too extensively. To cut it short, let me ask, Why, if incessant and elaborated variety is necessary to produce religious emotion, why is the Bible itself, (one solitary book,) all which heaven has given us for such a momentous purpose ? There is less in that volume, which is for all ages and sorts and conditions of men, than in many a Sunday School Library, designed only for children. And yet, God has thought it ample, or he would have given us more ; and the part intended specially for devotional feeling, was deemed so ample in the Old Testament that it was not augmented in the New. What does, what can this mean, but that it is a mistake, an entire mistake, to suppose this variety so indispensable to sustain and perpetuate piety ? “No man having drunk old wine, straightway desireth new, for he saith, The old is better.”* Such is our Saviour’s own solution of the case ; for he is referring to a matter of religious taste, and illustrates his position by our preference for one of the articles of a banquet—wine. He took that for an example, careless whether a rhetorician should think it beneath the dignity of his subject, because it is beneath

* Luke v. 39.

the comprehension of no one ; and I may fearlessly venture to follow him. Most truly, brethren, our taste for luxuries of a lower grade, is an admonition to us of the bias of the mind for luxuries addressed to the sensibilities. Those luxuries please us most, which grow richer by time ; those please the sensibilities most, which do the same. A book that we really love becomes more precious the older it grows, and the more we peruse it ; and so it may be with the book of prayers, as well as with any other.* This is emphatically true of a volume designed not so much for the intellect, as the feelings ; as a volume of poetry, a selection of hymns. But a Prayer Book is not designed to demonstrate religion, like a volume of sermons, it is designed to help us act religion out, designed to guide and prompt the feelings, to direct the affections towards God ; and such a book must become dearer and dearer to the affections, the more and the oftener they hover round it. We believe it will ever be so—that as the affections employ again and again the same forms of devotion, they twine around them, till no forms can so interest those affections as those with which they are completely familiar. But this is a point which our third head will more fully illustrate. To that accordingly let us turn.

III. It is this.—The objection to a liturgy, that sameness of language destroys devotion, is not true in

* “He was never tired of hearing anything that pleased him ; but would ask for it again and again.”—*Foster's Life and Correspondence*, ii. 468.

the experience of those who have most overcome our nature's defects, and best exhibited religion's excellencies.

A wider field is before us here, than under the head of discourse just concluded ; and yet time admonishes me to be studious of brevity. But two instances therefore shall be selected, of men whose piety has rarely or never been equalled, either by churchmen or their adversaries. Those two are George Herbert and Richard Baxter ; the one a steady and unblenching advocate of the Church of England, the other an equally steady and unblenching non-conformist.

When Herbert lay upon the pillow of a death-bed, he was visited by a clergyman sent by one of his nearest and dearest friends, to give him spiritual consolation, and to carry away a true report of his bodily health and state of mind. "Sir," said the dying saint to him, "I see by your habit that you are a priest, and I desire you to pray with me." And when the question was put in answer, "What prayers?" he exclaimed, "O sir, the prayers of my mother the Church of England, no other prayers are equal to them! but this time I beg you to pray only the Litany, for I am weak and faint,"*

Baxter lived to the age of seventy-six, and his life was a zealous warfare against bishops and liturgies ; yet when he was approaching the portals of the eternal world, candor drew from him the following remarkable

* Walton's Lives, ii. 202.

confession. "And now," he says, "it is the fundamental doctrines of the Catechism which I most highly value, and daily think of, and find most useful to myself and others. The Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments do find me now the most acceptable and plentiful matter for all my meditations. They are to me as my daily bread and drink ; and as I can speak and write of them over and over again, so I had rather read or hear of them, than of any of the schools niceties which once so much pleased me. And thus I observed it was with old Bishop Usher, and many other men."*

As Baxter has alluded to a contemporary, I will trespass upon my plan so far as to add the words of Richard Watson, just before his departure (the greatest name in the annals of Methodism, Wesley himself hardly excepted). "Read," said he, "the *Te Deum*, it seems to unite one in spirit with the whole Catholic church in earth and in heaven."†

Here, brethren, you have the dying testimony of men, whose piety has received the highest commendation, within and without our communion ; and, as you perceive, it is singularly illustrative, in each case, of the position for which I have contended, that sameness of words hinders not piety when it is genuine, nay the rather helps it, the deeper and more staid that piety becomes. It is not in the outset of their career, when their piety required attestation and strength, that

* Prac. Works. 8vo ed. i. 778. Sylvester's Baxter, Pt. I. 126.

† Jackson's Life of Watson, p. 446. New York, 1836.

Herbert, and Baxter, and Watson, say that the most familiar language of religion is their souls' best nourishment. It is in their latest, soberest, most solemn and heavenly hours of contemplation ; when their spirits were lingering around these mortal shores, and about stretching their pinions for a flight to Paradise. Such examples cannot be gainsayed. They cannot be doubted by candor, or by charity. The sternest logic cannot frown them away. They are results in the experience of the heart, as immutable as the laws of Nature, and as plain in their bearing.

Most exquisitely does the great epic poet of Rome teach the immortality of a profound attachment, when he represents one of his dying heroes, dwelling with his latest recollections upon the beloved home of his childhood.* So these holy men, when about leaving the world forever, went back to, and dwelt upon, forms of religion consecrated from infancy ; and to you, my brethren, at the same momentous crisis of your career, I cannot wish a sweeter solace than a Litany or a Catechism, or a *Te Deum* can afford you, plain enough for children, as you may account them now.

Be encouraged and cheered, and assured then, by such examples and reasonings as have been laid before you, to confront the cavils, the censures, or the sneers, with which the sameness of our liturgy is (or rather has been) so often assailed. Time fails me when I think how such examples and reasonings might be sup-

* *Æneid*, x. 782.

ported by argument, on two more topics which were assigned to this discussion, but which must now be abandoned, *viz.*, the nature of prayer itself, as an exercise not for exciting the mind into enthusiasm, but for subduing it into reverence, humility, repentance and tenderness; and also the fact, that the objection founded on sameness lies about as directly against extempore as against liturgical devotions—these devotions soon running into the same channels of thought, and by and by, of expression also.*

*As these points of the discourse were not enlarged upon, I had intended to add something respecting them in a note or two. But a discovery of the following language, from a Presbyterian or Independent, in the New York Evangelist for Nov. 9, 1843, has led me to believe that it will accomplish all I could do, and even more. Without offering any thing of my own, I may therefore adopt this writer's language, "I have *quoted* enough to answer my purpose."

"PRESBYTERIAN FORMS OF PRAYER.—Presbyterians, in common with many other denominations, object to forms of prayer, such as are used in the service of the Episcopal church. The arguments which they urge against their use, it is necessary to repeat at this time, as they are well known to intelligent Christians in all our churches. Suffice to say, that in our opinion, forms of prayer are far from being scriptural or best adapted to promote devotion. But my object now is not to attack this branch of Episcopalian practice, but to draw attention to the practical evil as it exists in churches which reject stated forms. It consists in the reiteration of certain words and phrases to an extent almost sufficient to justify the Episcopalian in answering our argument against the Prayer Book, by quoting the ancient proverb, 'Physician, heal thyself.' Many Christians through inadvertence suffer their thoughts to be nearly always expressed in the same way, and thus their prayers seem to have been committed to memory from some

But I must pass such considerations over, to remind you, in concluding, how piety depends far less upon excitement than upon principle; and that the present age will discover this sooner or later to its sorrow and its shame. Excitement, excitement, is now the cry, and that religion which will not furnish it, is ruled out of regard, as flat, and tame, and spiritless. The Bible itself is grown old-fashioned; and the Prayer Book at last complained of, (a complaint which, battered as the

esteemed model. For illustration: how often do we hear members of our churches always address God by the same title without variation. The prayer *always* commences, 'unchangeably great and glorious God!' &c., &c. Now that to which we object is not the expression, but the invariableness with which it is used. So as the prayer proceeds, we know what to expect, for the brother never leads our devotions without saying that 'we deserve to be made as miserable as we have made ourselves sinful,' that we 'thank God for not casting us off, as he has many who were as good by nature, and far better by practice, than ourselves;' that 'we would enter into a covenant never to be broken, never to be forgotten,' and asking that 'sinners may be convicted and converted,' that 'multitudes may be heard inquiring the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward,' that 'the Lord would comfort poor mourners,' that 'salvation may run down our streets like a flood,' that the Lord would 'bless all for whom we are in duty bound to pray,' &c., &c., together with the quotation of the same passages of scripture on every occasion, such as 'thou hast said, when two or three are gathered together in thy name,' &c., asking for the coming of the time 'when no man shall say to his neighbor, know thou the Lord,' &c. I might mention numerous other words and phrases which are heard, over and over again, in our prayer meetings, but I have quoted enough to answer my purpose."

Compare with this the remarks of Mr. Henry Ward Beecher in the *Independent* to the same effect.

book has been, I did think it would escape forever,) at last complained of, because it is all out of the Bible, and has nothing new in it.* O my brethren, it was an excitement, and just such an excitement as this age pants for, which crucified the Lord of Glory. The shout of the people carried a Redeemer to his cross. And it may crucify him yet again, if already it has not begun such a heaven-daring crime. Value such excitement less, as you would enjoy that golden gift of your religion, a peace which passeth all understanding. How calm, placid, unenthusiastic, is the spirit of your Redeemer's prayer! How next to impossible would it be to obtain a shout, nay, a murmur of approbation, for that foremost of all prayers ever given for a disciple of Christ! But did not Christ know best what temper he wanted in his followers—what spirit he would have his religion breathe into their souls?

Be content then, to be as calm, and meek, and gentle, as he wishes. In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.† A quiet and never slackening use of the means of grace, shall make you meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, faster than the endless experiments of an age gone mad for novelties. A quiet faith, quiet prayers, and a quiet conscience, shall be your best passports to a hopeful grave and to the gates of Heaven.

* A complaint actually encountered by me, in my parochial rounds. Of course not a fancy, but a fact.

† Isa. xxx. 15.

Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God—our Saviour—be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. AMEN.

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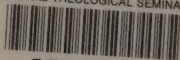
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